

# Activity—Animal Research and Report

<p><b>Standard IV</b> Students will gain an understanding of Life Science through the study of changes in organisms over time and the nature of living things.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1</b> Investigate living things</p>
<p><b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b>                      Communicating Science:                      Communicating effectively using science language and reasoning                      Knowing in Science:                      Understanding the nature of Science</p>
<p><b>Content Connections:</b> Language Arts</p>

## Background Information

The teacher will be responsible for identifying an animal that can easily be found and observed in the local area. The setting in which children observe or interact with the animal should be safe both for the child and the animal. Some creatures to consider are insects, worms, frogs, toads, lizards, turtles, rabbits, birds, and fish. The teacher should be prepared to help the children find books, web-sites, resource people, etc. so they can find information to answer questions generated by the class.

## Invitation to Learn

Create an anticipation guide to introduce the animal that will be studied by the class. An appropriate anticipation guide for kindergarten students would consist of three to five true or false questions written on a chart or overhead. The students listen and follow along as the teacher reads aloud the questions. After each question the class indicates whether the answer is true or false. This can be done by having the students show thumbs up for true or thumbs down for false. The teacher can write on the chart or overhead the response that the majority of the students indicate. The teacher then reads a short selection of text that answers each of the questions. After listening to the text, the teacher and students reread the questions and check to see if their answers are correct. Each question should be clearly answered from a portion of the text (see the example “Anticipation Guide” about frogs).

## Materials

*One per class:*

- 4-5 sheets of chart paper
- markers
- animal of teacher’s choice
- books and other resources to obtain information about the given animal

*One per student:*

- paper
- pencil and/or crayons
- clipboard

### ***Instructional Procedures***

Tell the students that they are going to begin an in depth study of an animal that lives near them. The study of frogs will be the example given here. However, these steps and strategies can be used to study any topic of the teacher or student's choice.

1. Give each student a clipboard, pencil, and paper. Take students to a place where they can carefully observe a frog. Students should record with drawings and words the interesting things they notice about the frog.

*Our Observations  
About a Frog*

*Questions About a Frog*

2. After making individual observations, ask the class to share their observations with the class. The teacher should record these findings on a large chart paper entitled "Our Observations About a Frog."
3. Ask the class, "Now that we have made some interesting observations about the frog, do you have any questions that you wonder about or that come to your mind?" Record the class questions on another chart entitled "Our Questions About a Frog." It is suggested that the class only record three to five questions that are especially interesting to them. This will make finding the answers to the given questions more manageable.

4. Tell the class, "These are some great questions! I can't wait to find out the answers to these questions. Do any of you have some ideas about how we could get answers to our questions?" The class will brainstorm a variety of ways to get answers to questions. The list should at least include different kinds of books, internet options, resource people, and possible places to visit.
5. The teacher should model for students and help them understand the different ways that questions can be answered. This is an example of modeling how to read and listen to find answers in books. A teacher could begin by saying, "I think we could do some reading so we can answer our questions. I'll read part of this book. Listen for information that might answer this question (identify a specific question for the question chart) and give me the thumbs up sign when you hear some information we should remember." After reading, allow the students to tell the answer they think they heard to a partner sitting near them. Record the answer the class agrees upon on a separate chart entitled, "Answers to Our Questions?" This chart should be placed by the question chart so that the students can clearly see the relationship between the question and the answer. This process of finding answers to questions is repeated over several days until all of the questions have been answered.
6. Throughout the animal research process, a separate chart containing content vocabulary words could be created. The chart may be entitled, "Words About Frogs." As the class comes across new vocabulary words in their reading the words could be added to the chart. One or two students could draw a simple picture next to the word illustrating its meaning. This list does not need to be lengthy. Rather it should simply meet the immediate needs of the students.
7. After the class has found answers to their questions, the students may be asked to work independently or with a partner to draw a picture and write a simple sentence showing their understanding of one of the new facts they learned. These pages could be shared orally with the class and then compiled into a class book.

### ***Assessment Suggestion***

As an entire class, create a summary paragraph about what the class learned and what they would still like to know. The paragraph could be written on chart paper or on the overhead (see the example summary paragraph).

### ***Additional Resources***

*All About Frogs* by Jim Arnosky

*Amazing Frogs and Toads* by Barry Clarke, Eyewitness Juniors

*Frogs* by Gail Gibbons

*How to Hide, A Meadow Frog* by Ruth Heller

*It's a Frog's Life* by Steve Parker

*The Frog Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta

*Tale of a Tadpole* by Barbara Ann Porte

*Frog's Eggs* Alex Ramsay and Paul Humphrey

*From Tadpole to Frog* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld

### ***Family Connections***

Each child should select a local animal of their choice to research at home with their family and create a book about the animal to share with the class (see the example parent letter and animal fact book format).

# Anticipation Guide

## What Do You Know About Frogs?

- True or False    1.    Frogs have dry and bumpy skin.  
True or False    2.    Frogs jump to get away from predators.  
True or False    3.    Frogs live on every continent except Antarctica.

### All About Frogs

*excerpts taken from the book by Jim Arnosky*

“Frogs and toads are similar but different animals. Frogs have moist, smooth skin. Toads have dry, bumpy skin. Frogs have large hind legs and can jump great distances. Toads have small hind legs and can only make short hops.

Because of the jumping ability, frogs almost always try to flee from danger. Toads squat down and stay motionless. Many predators eat frogs. Few predators eat toads because when a toad is threatened its skin excretes moisture that irritates the eyes, mouth, and nasal membranes of many animals including humans.

Frogs live on every continent except Antarctica. Worldwide, there are more than one thousand species of frogs. Everyone can be identified by its color and markings.”

## Summary Paragraph

\_\_\_\_\_ (Topic Title)

Although I already knew that \_\_\_\_\_

by observing and reading, I learned \_\_\_\_\_

Another fact I learned was \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, I learned that \_\_\_\_\_

However, one question I still have is \_\_\_\_\_

Some new words I learned about \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

I think studying about \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents:

During the next week, your child will have a unique homework opportunity that will require your help. Each child will be making their own animal fact book entitled *My Book About* \_\_\_\_\_.

Please help your child select an animal that is of interest to him or her. At school we have been focusing on animals in our local environment. It may be any kind of animal (mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, or fish). The animal selected will be the topic for the book. After selecting an animal, find two or three resource materials that will help your child learn more about that particular animal. You may wish to use a book, encyclopedia, magazine, or internet site.

Beginning today, your child will bring home all of the pages for the book. Complete one page per day and return it on \_\_\_\_\_. We encourage you to complete only one page per day. The quality of your child's work is greater when he or she does not have to complete the book all at one time. The resource materials that you have chosen will help you answer the questions for each day of the week. Below is a suggested schedule.

Day 1: What does it eat?

Day 2: Where does it live?

Day 3: How does it move?

Day 4: Who are its enemies?

Day 5: What is its body covering? (scales, fur, feathers, etc.)

To help your child successfully complete this project, please use the following steps each night as you work on a page.

1. Brainstorm possibilities.
2. Research to find the facts. Read the information aloud to your child. Let your child study pictures they may wish to use as part of their illustrations.
3. Rough Draft: On a scratch paper, have your child draw with a pencil or crayons a facsimile of what he or she would like on the final copy. We have been working on using all of the space on the paper and adding pertinent details. Practice copying words your child may choose to write. Remember to spend most of your time on the final copy.
4. Final Copy: Your child may use any medium he or she would like to illustrate their book (markers, construction paper cutouts, crayons, chalk, magazine pictures, etc.) You and your child may decide who will write the text of the story.

When all of the book pages are completed and returned to school, we will bind each child's book. The completion of this project will allow your child to achieve many important goals. Each child will orally present the information about their animal to the class. We will compare and contrast the different animals that we learn about. We will work on many Utah State Core Skills in the area of language arts, math, and science. We would also like to include this project in your child's portfolio.

We hope you will support us in making this a very positive learning experience. We appreciate your help.

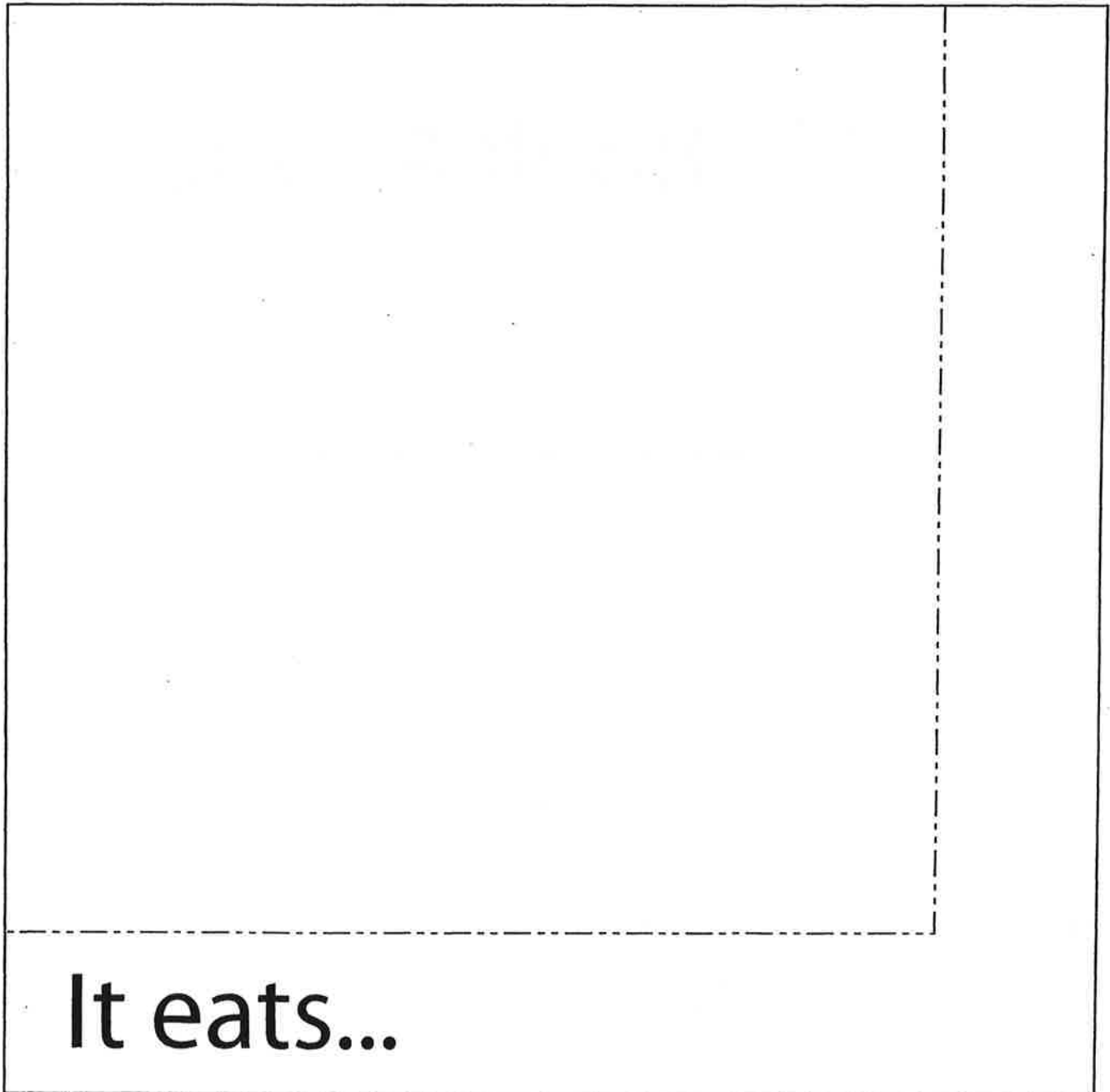
Sincerely,

# My Book About

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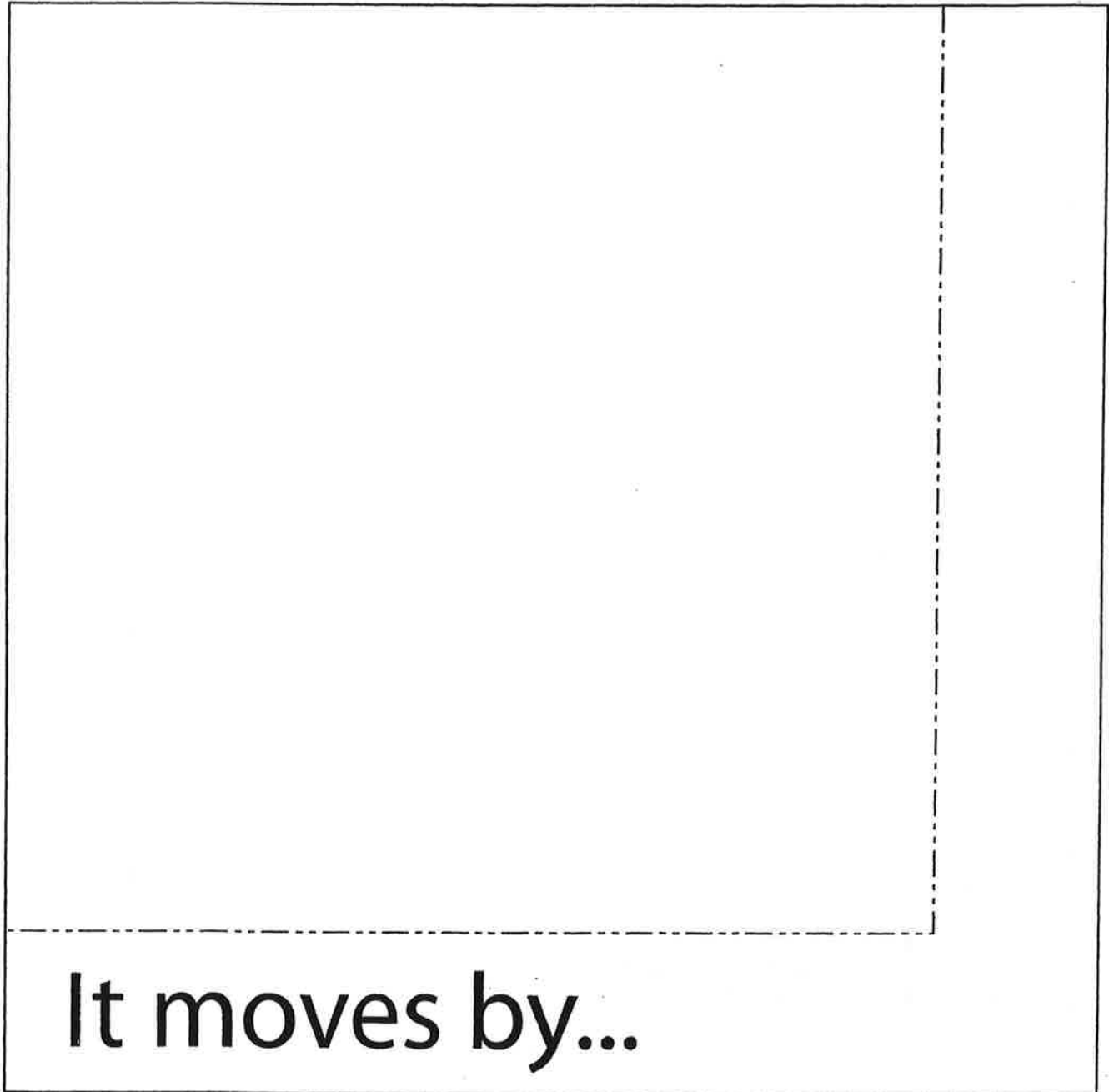
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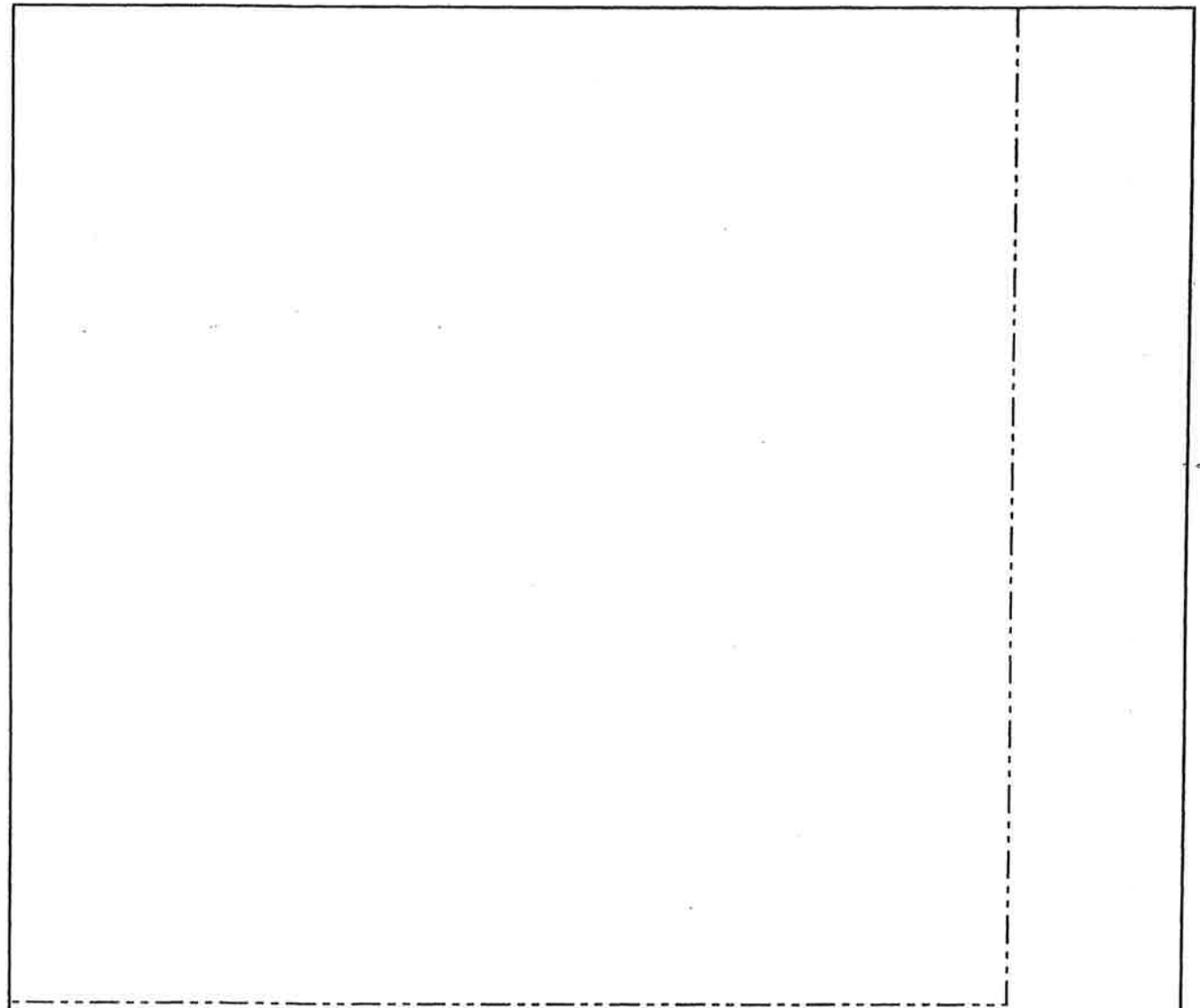




It lives in...



Its enemies are...



Its body covering is...