
INTRODUCTION

Animal alphabets have been around for a long time, but Animal Rhythms is special. It is designed to teach young children the letters of the alphabet and their sounds, using colorful animal puppets, appealing alliterative chants, feely letters, art projects, cooking and tasting experiences, related science and maths activities, and lots of English ideas.

Animal Rhythms is specially designed to encourage and maintain that wonderful enthusiasm for learning that children exhibit when they first come to school. What children can resist puppets that they have made? How can they not respond to the curiosity that is stirred when they discover bear tracks on the floor one morning leading to a basket full of things that begin with "b"? Or how can they keep still when hearing cheers for Bobby Bear or Penguin Pete?

Animal Rhythms is a total readiness program. Using the alphabet as a base, it coordinates many areas of the curriculum, enriching the learning experience and making it more meaningful. Its materials can be used alone or in conjunction with almost any other program. Though arranged alphabetically, the letters may be presented in any order suitable for the group of children who will be using the program.

A wide range of ideas is offered so that the program can be tailored to meet the needs of a variety of young learners. You can pick the activities that best suit your group of children.

Animal Rhythms is full of exciting materials. We hope that everyone who uses Animal Rhythms will enjoy the experience as much as the authors have enjoyed its creation.

Puppets

Children love puppets. Puppets become friends and playmates, and through them a variety of concepts can be explored.

What better way to encourage children to learn the sound of the letter "t" than to have them construct a puppet of Tiger Tim to take home, with the animal rhythm on the back and a bow tie under his chin with the letter "T t" written on it?

Patterns for Tiger Tim and all the other letter animals are included in this book. Construction pages for the puppets show a diagram of each puppet's face and list the patterns to use, with suggested colors and notes on construction details.

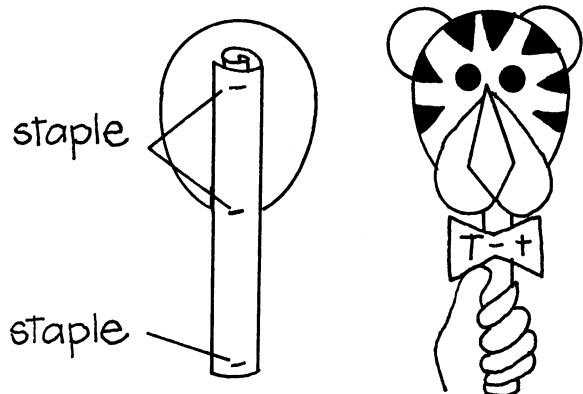
Duplicate the pattern pieces on lightweight cardboard stock, and cut them out. Use them as tracing patterns,

or duplicate them onto heavy paper for the children to make into their puppets.

When the puppet's face is assembled and pasted together, staple it to a wooden tongue depressor. Or make a tube out of a piece of heavy paper, and staple the animal to that.

In order to allow for each child's individual expression, children can cut freehand some of the parts of the animal faces, such as the eyes, nose, stripes, spots, and whiskers. As a result, each child's puppet will have unique characteristics. The patterns are included, however, for the teacher's use or for very young children who have not had much experience with cutting and pasting.

The puppets are fun to make, and they also provide practice of visual and small motor skills. In addition, each animal becomes a personal friend and treasured reminder of each letter and sound.



Rhythms

Teddy bear, Teddy bear, turn around.
Teddy bear, Teddy bear, touch the ground.

Teddy bear, Teddy bear, show your shoe.

Teddy bear, Teddy bear, that will do.

Playground and jump-rope chants are hard to forget. Every generation uses them, and somehow they never change. Their rhythms and special wording make them fun to say and easy to remember. It is with this in mind that the rhythmic, alliterative animal rhythms were created. They are designed to help children internalize the sounds of the alphabet letters as they occur at the beginning of words.

To teach a rhythm, say it over and over for the children, inviting them to join you when they are ready. Where the letter is repeated in the first and last line, say the letter name and then the sound.

Accompany each unit of study with many repetitions of the corresponding animal rhythm. Say the jingles with the beat and enthusiasm of a group at a football match. Chant them. Whisper them. March, clap, hop, jump, and shout them. Repeat them over and over. The repetitions will be fun, and the children will soon have them memorized.

