

Under One Rock

Activities by Anthony Fredericks

Inside:

Word Wise—Duplicate the Word Wise activity sheet (page 3). As part of a language arts lesson, invite students to think of other adjectives that could be used to describe the featured animals in Under One Rock. You may wish to pose some of the following questions:

- Which animal has the most adjectives?
- Which of the adjectives on our chart could be used to describe people in this classroom?
- Are there any adjectives that could be used for multiple animals? If so, which ones?
- Based on the adjectives on our chart, which of the creatures would you like to learn more about?

Classified Ad—Provide students with copies of the classified ads section of a daily newspaper. Develop a mini-lesson to show them the various components of selected classified ads (e.g. short, pithy sentences, abbreviations, contact information). Afterwards, invite small student groups to each develop a classified ad based on information in Under One Rock. Here’s an example:

FOR RENT: Big gray rock. Perfect location—large field.
Lots of sunlight, lots of quiet. Very friendly neighbors. Plenty of food.
Available immediately. Reasonable rates.
Call Clarence Cricket at 123-4567 anytime after dusk.

Outside:

Observation Ring—Provide each of the students with a copy of the Observation Ring activity sheet (page 4). Invite them to work in small groups to set up several “rings” on a designated area of the school grounds. Ask student to record the various creatures that “visit” their rings over the course of several days or several weeks. How do those creatures compare with the creatures featured in the book?

Wonder Worms—Worms are some of the most surprising creatures on earth. This activity will help you make some fascinating discoveries about these creatures.

Materials:

- large wide-mouthed jar
- tin can
- gravel or small pebbles

- soil
- 5 or 6 earthworms (also known as nightcrawlers) from your garden, the bait shop, or a local pet store
- dark construction paper

Directions:

1. Stand the can in the middle of the glass jar.
2. Place a layer of gravel or small pebbles about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep on the bottom of the jar, between the can and the jar sides.
3. Fill the jar with garden soil up to the height of the tin can.
4. Place the worms on top of the soil.
5. Wrap the dark construction paper around the outside of the jar to keep out the light. (Check the condition of the soil every so often and moisten it as needed.)

What to expect:

The worms will begin burrowing into the soil. After several days, they will have dug a series of tunnels. You will be able to see these tunnels by carefully removing the construction paper from the sides of the jar. (Replace the construction paper after observing their work so the worms will continue to tunnel in the darkness.) You should be able to watch the worms' behavior without harming them, for 3 or 4 weeks, but then you should put them back outside.

Worms feed by taking soil through their bodies, creating tunnels as they go. These tunnels aerate the soil, providing plants with the oxygen they need to grow. If it weren't for earthworms, many varieties of plants would not be able to survive.

Rock Dictionary—Students may enjoy creating their own “Rock” dictionary. Take the class outside and locate a rock. Spend some time examining all the features of the rock and the immediate surroundings. Ask students to record words, phrases or sentences about various facts, features, or observations of the rock and any inhabitants in or around the rock. Upon your return to the classroom, invite students to work in small groups to develop a dictionary using (if possible) all the letters of the alphabet. Read some examples:

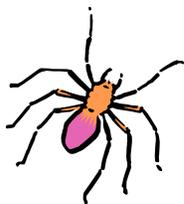
- A – Amazing environment, Ants
- B – Bugs, Bottom
- C – Critters, Cool
- D – Damp, Daylight (everybody hides)
- E – Empty holes, Exciting place

Word Wise Activity Sheet

There were seven primary animals featured in the book *Under One Rock*. Each of the animals was described using specific adjectives. For each of the animals in the column on the left side of this chart you will note two specific adjectives. After conducting some additional research (e.g. library, Internet, encyclopedia, under a rock), you are invited to add two more adjectives that could be used to describe each creature.

Afterwards, insert five more animals in the blank spaces in the left-hand column. For each animal that you include locate four specific adjectives that could be used to describe each creature.

ANIMAL	ADJECTIVE	ADJECTIVE	ADJECTIVE	ADJECTIVE
Earthworms	squiggly	round		
Ants	tiny	diggers		
Spider	8-eyed	busy		
Beetle	shiny	black		
Field Crickets	singers	leapers		
Millipede	many feet	sensitive		
Slugs	slimy	creepers		



Observation Ring Activity Sheet

Here's an interesting activity that you can do any time and any place.

Materials:

- four sharpened pencils
- string
- magnifying lens

Directions:

1. Go outside and select a section of grassy area (part of a yard, lawn, or playground).
2. Push four sharpened pencils into the soil in a one-foot square pattern.
3. Tie string around the pencils, making a miniature "boxing ring" on the ground.
4. Get on your hands and knees and look closely inside the square.

Description:

If you look carefully enough and long enough you'll begin to see many different critters. You may want to keep some "Field Notes" of all the different types of animals you see inside the ring. Note the movements, habits, or behaviors of any animals (ants, grasshoppers, caterpillars, worms) as they travel (jump, crawl, slither) through the ring. You might want to visit your "ring" frequently over a period of several weeks.

