



City Kids and City Critters!

Activities for Urban Explorers



IN A NUTSHELL

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SUBJECTS

Language Arts
Mathematics
Physical Education
Science
Social Studies

The activities in this book encourage children to become "nature detectives" and to sharpen their observation skills in order to locate, recognize and understand the animals that they encounter. The activities in the first chapter focus on sensory awareness. Subsequent chapters address specific locations where wildlife might be found, such as ponds, backyards, streets, and vacant lots. Children are thus exposed to creatures as diverse as ants, caterpillars, raccoons, foxes, and pigeons. Students are encouraged to keep observation journals, develop and test hypotheses, and are provided with field guides to direct their investigations. Activities include searching for animal tracks, counting and identifying animals and plants in different locations, playing simulation games involving animal feeding habits, and worm composting. Environmental concepts, such as habitat and adaptation are explored in the process. Students are given the subjects, skills, concepts, and necessary materials to attract animals. Teachers are advised how to keep outdoor experiments safe. Each chapter is followed by a list of recommended readings. In addition, the book includes a glossary, an index, bibliography, and resource list.

Grade Level
3-6

Length
155 pages

Date Published
1996

THE BOTTOM
LINE

"The tactile learner would excel with these activities because of the great emphasis on learning and observing with the senses."

What the REVIEWERS Said !	Key Characteristics	Strengths Noted	Other Considerations
	Fairness and Accuracy	Sources of information are well documented. Activities encourage students to explore and to make their own observations.	Unclear if content has been through peer reviews. Diversity of children involved in "kid testing" not specified. Students featured in drawings appear to be all caucasian.
	Depth	Very strong on building awareness.	No conceptual framework or connections between the different activities.
	Emphasis on Skills Building	Makes use of a number of observation and reasoning skills.	Weak on creative thinking process.
	Action Orientation	N o t A p p l i c a b l e.	
	Instructional Soundness	Diverse lessons provide for different learning styles. Makes connections to learners' everyday lives. Many activities involve taking the students outdoors.	Does not include learner outcomes. Curriculum is very teacher-driven.
	Usability	Illustrations and masters of handouts are clear and easy to use. Overall structure is very clear. Background material is brief and to the point.	Lessons were not organized sequentially. Some materials might be difficult to obtain.

"The proposed activities are well thought out; they are fun and basics will be learned. What do we do with what we have learned? That is missing."

"Specific to urban kids, but could be used for other neighborhoods."