

Wildlife Express

December 2021 – American Marten

Activities:

Oh My, Oh My, Mustelid: Choose a mustelid, research it! Create a wheel with important facts.

Tracks Bingo & Tracks Trunk: Play TRACKS bingo to learn about animal tracks! Check out the Tracks trunk at IDFG (Treasure Valley).

Project WILD's Thicket Game: Pine martens can be hard to see. Play this hide and seek game to learn about camouflage and techniques for hiding!

Classification Cube Game: For a fun review of animals and great discussions, play this game.

Fur, Feathers, Hair & Scales Booklet: Write a non-fiction book for peers and younger children about animal coverings.



My Oh, My, Mustelid

Subject: Science

Objective: Students will be able to use various sources to research a mustelid and create a mustelid wheel demonstrating knowledge.

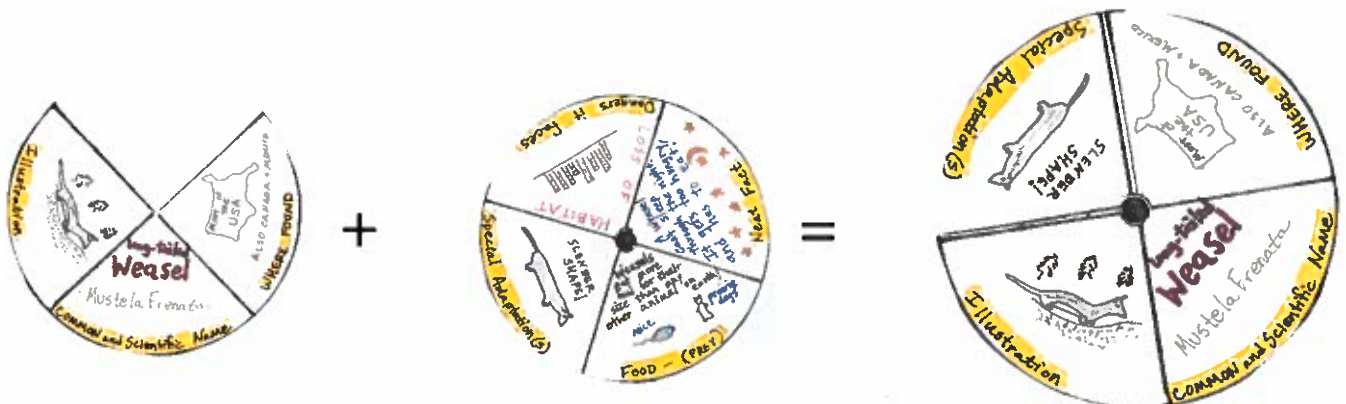
Materials:

- construction paper (2 pieces/student)
- scissors
- research materials
- coloring tools
- brad for each student



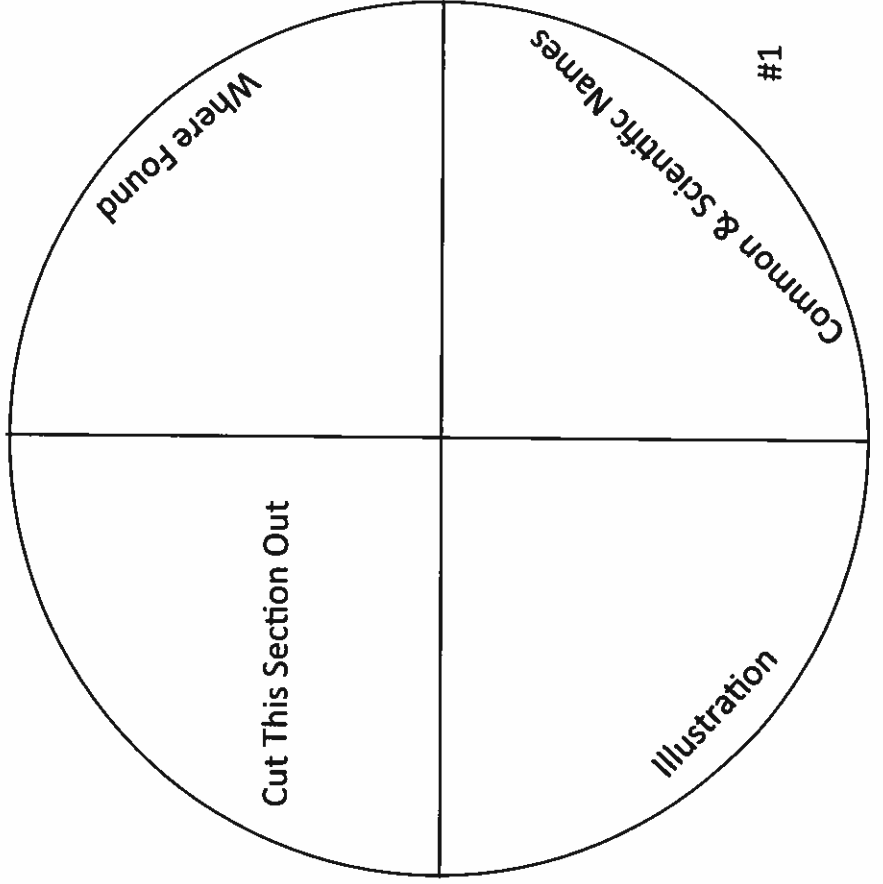
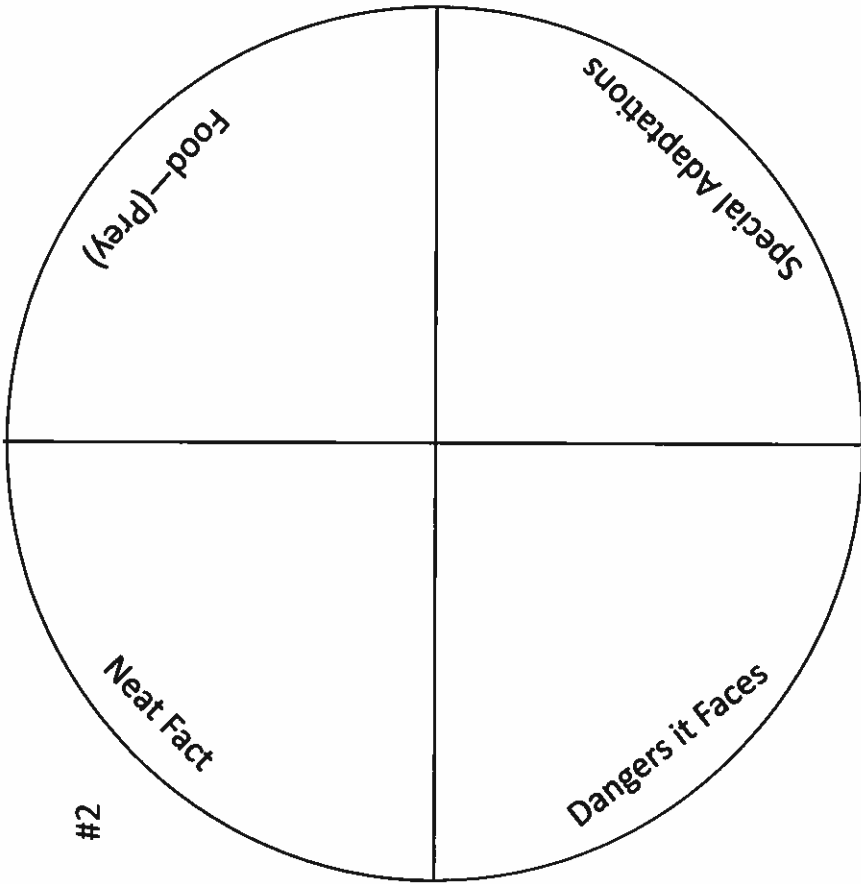
Procedure:

1. Review with students the animal kingdom. The American marten is in a family called mustelids. Mustelids come in many sizes, but most have short legs and short round ears and thick fur. Mustelids also all have scent glands that are used for different purposes. Remind students that scientists are continually monitoring animal classification. The skunk, for instance, used to be classified as a mustelid, but it no longer is in that group. Scientists have found that it actually belongs to a subfamily called Mephitidae.
2. Discuss other mustelids found in the United States (weasels, badgers, sea otters, river otters, ferrets, minks, wolverines, and martens.) Talk about how mustelids are different from each other. Review animal adaptations. Remind students that all of the varied sizes, shapes, diets and hunting methods are ways that help the animals to survive in the environment in which they live.
3. Assign each student (or pair of students) a mustelid to research. Students should gather information and, with it, create a mustelid wheel. Hand out the following *Wildlife Worksheet* for a pattern. Have students complete the wheel. The circles can be glued to construction paper and then cut out to make the wheel stronger.
4. After students share their wheels with one another, display wheels for others to learn about mustelids!



My, Oh, My, Mustelid

Directions: Complete the circles with words and illustrations. Color. Cut out and glue circles to construction paper. Cut out circles again and place circle # 1 on top of circle #2. Place a brad in the middle to hold the wheel together.



TRACKS Bingo

Subjects: Science

Objectives: Students play Bingo to become familiar with animal tracks.

Materials:


- Copies of Tracks page (one for each student to cut up and two for you)
- Blank TRACK card for each student
- Markers (beans, poker chips or small pieces of paper)
- Glue Sticks



Procedure:

1. Before class, cut up two of the track sheets and place them in a hat or bucket from which you can draw.
2. To begin, review the tracks with your students. Tell them they will be playing a game of Bingo, using animal tracks instead of numbers. Each student will need a sheet with tracks, a glue stick and a blank TRACKS card. Once the students have these items, instruct them to cut out the tracks and glue them in any order to the blank TRACK sheet (one track in each square). There will be two tracks left over. The middle space is FREE.
3. Play TRACK. Start with the letter T and choose a track card from the draw bucket. Example: "T- Grizzly Bear." Keep a tally sheet of the cards you draw for each letter. Then go to R. Choose another track. Continue reading all the letters across (TRACK) and begin again once you get to the end. Students should mark the tracks they have on their cards as you call them out.
4. When someone gets a TRACK (5 in a row), they should call out, "TRACKER!" Check their answers with your tally sheet. You can then have students clear their cards to play again, or they can go for a blackout.
5. Celebrate the winners by giving all students animal crackers or another treat. 😊
6. If you're in the Treasure Valley, take the activity to the next level by checking out IDFG's Track Trunk! Message Lori for details. Lori.adams@idfg.idaho.gov



T	R	A	C	K
				

BINGO


T

R

A

C

K

BINGO

T

R

A

C

K



Big horn sheep



Bobcat



Raccoon



Red squirrel



Elk



Gray wolf



Jack rabbit



Moose



Grizzly bear



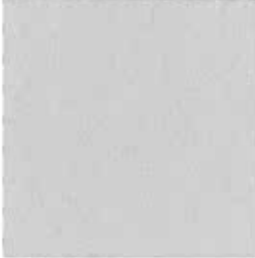
Deer mouse



Badger



Chipmunk



White-tailed deer



Wolverine



Mink



Pika



River otter



Porcupine



American marten



Pronghorn



Mountain lion



Striped skunk



Mountain goat



Kangaroo rat

Create a unique to you TRACK card by cutting out each square and gluing it on a blank TRACK card in any order.



Thicket Game

Predators and prey engage in a high stakes contest of hide and seek.

Objectives

Students will (1) identify examples of adaptation in animals, and (2) describe the importance of adaptation to animals.

Background

Animals are adapted to their environment in order to survive. Animals may also be adapted to changes in their habitats. For example, snowshoe rabbits have a white winter coat to blend with a snowy environment and a tan summer coat to blend with summer ground and vegetation colors. Chameleons change color to blend with their surroundings. The walking-stick insect can look like a twig or stick. Fawns have spotted hair that resembles dappled light on the forest floor in spring. Adaptations to predator and prey relationships may also include behavioral (e.g., hiding or flight) and physical (e.g., camouflage) variations.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to understand the importance of adaptation to animals.

Procedure

Play it safe. Prior to conducting this activity, scan your site for any toxic plants, stinging insects, or other hazards. In warmer temperatures, consider spaces in which participants can easily avoid brushing up against brush and tall grass to avoid biting insects such as chiggers and ticks.

1. Take the group to a place outdoors that represents a “thicket.” This place should have areas where students can hide.
2. Blindfold one student who will be the “predator.” The predator slowly counts to 20 while the other students, or “prey,” hide. Students who are hiding must be able to see some part of the predator at all times.



Grade Level:

Lower Elementary,
Upper Elementary

Content Areas:

Science, Environmental
Education, Expressive Arts,
Physical Education

Method:

Students become “predator” and “prey” in a version of “hide and seek.”

Materials: Blindfolds; outdoor area such as a thicket or other vegetated area free of poisonous plants and other hazards where students can hide safely, or a “thicket” built using desks, chairs, and blankets in a large room

Activity Time:

one 30-minute session

People Power: minimum of five students

Setting:

outdoors

Conceptual Framework

Topic Reference:

CAIIA, CAIIA1, CAIIA1b

Terms to Know:

adaptation, predator, prey, thicket

Appendices:

Field Ethics, Simulations



WILD Work

In this activity, you need to learn the layout of the land to survive! **Geographers**

study many features of an area to understand as much as they can about the place. For example, knowing what natural features are on the land might help people better provide for needs of wildlife. **Wildlife Biologists** study wildlife and predict how animals will utilize the land to improve their chances for survival. Learn more about these interesting occupations at www.projectwild.org.



In Step with STEM

■ **Crypsis**, or camouflage, is a commonly used mechanism for prey to avoid predators. See if you can spot animals using camouflage in videos. Go to www.projectwild.org for links.

- Using the ecosystem from the “Thicket Game” activity as your guide, brainstorm an organism that could survive the longest in the thicket without being killed by a predator. When you think you have created the ideal critter, research organisms that exist in habitats like the thicket. Do any of the animals closely resemble the one you created?

3. After counting, the predator removes the blindfold and looks for prey. The predator can turn around, squat, or stand on his or her tiptoes, but cannot walk or change location. The predator should see how many students he or she can find, identify them out loud, and describe where they are. When identified, the prey students move to the predator’s location and wait until the next round to become predators. Make sure the students do not tell the original predator where any of the students are hiding.

4. When the original predator cannot see any more students, a new round starts. All of the predators put on blindfolds and stand in close proximity to each other. Each predator has the same motion restrictions. Again, the original predator counts aloud to 20. At that point all the remaining prey must move at least 10 feet closer to the predators. Those remaining prey still try to remain hidden. All predators remove their blindfolds and take turns naming students they can see.

5. Play as many rounds as necessary until only one or two prey students are left. At that time, have the remaining students stand up and identify themselves. It may be surprising how close the prey got to the predators without being detected. The ability to remain undetected and to detect others is an example of successful adaptation. Introduce the term “adaptation.”

6. Conduct the activity one or two more times.

7. Discuss what made predators and prey successful. Were they quiet, clever, camouflaged, or good listeners? Ask students to identify animals that are adapted with similar survival characteristics.

8. Ask the students how they could change to be more successful predators and prey. Some ideas that may come out are changing color (clothes), wearing clothing that does not stick to plants, being smaller, or climbing a tree. Ask the students if animals can make any similar kinds of changes.

9. Talk about differences between physical and behavioral changes. Have the students identify which adaptations related to predators and prey are behavioral, which are physical, and which involve both.

10. Ask students to summarize what they have learned. See if students can think of other examples of animal adaptations. Generalize that all animals are adapted to survive.

Assessment

1. Describe the importance of adaptations to animals. Give at least two examples of animal adaptations.
2. Create a play or skit that shows how both predators and prey are adapted to survive.

Classification Cube Game

Subject: Science

Objective: Students will be able to share their knowledge by playing a “dice” game.

Materials:

- two pieces of card stock for each set you will be making
- scissors
- printer
- glue or tape

Procedure:

1. Determine how many cubes you want to create. Create the cubes by printing as many sets as you’ll need. One cube displays a classification of animals, and the other offers a question to answer about that classification. Kids can play independently and record answers, you can form teams, or you, as the teacher, can play against the whole class!
2. Cut out the cubes, following directions on the sheet.
3. Once cubes are made, go over the following rules to play:
 1. Roll each cube.
 2. Follow the directions on the cube with the animal classification that was rolled. One point is earned if an individual or team can answer correctly (and everyone agrees it’s correct).
 3. The cubes then go to the other team or individual and play continues.
 4. If a person or team cannot answer correctly, they may pass. The other team then has a chance to “steal” the point by answering correctly.
 5. If both teams are unable to answer, the cubes are rolled again and play resumes with no one earning a point.
 6. The first group to receive 15 points wins.
4. If you taped your cubes, remove the tape and flatten it to store for next time!



Cube Pattern



INSECTS



MAMMALS



REPTILES



BIRDS

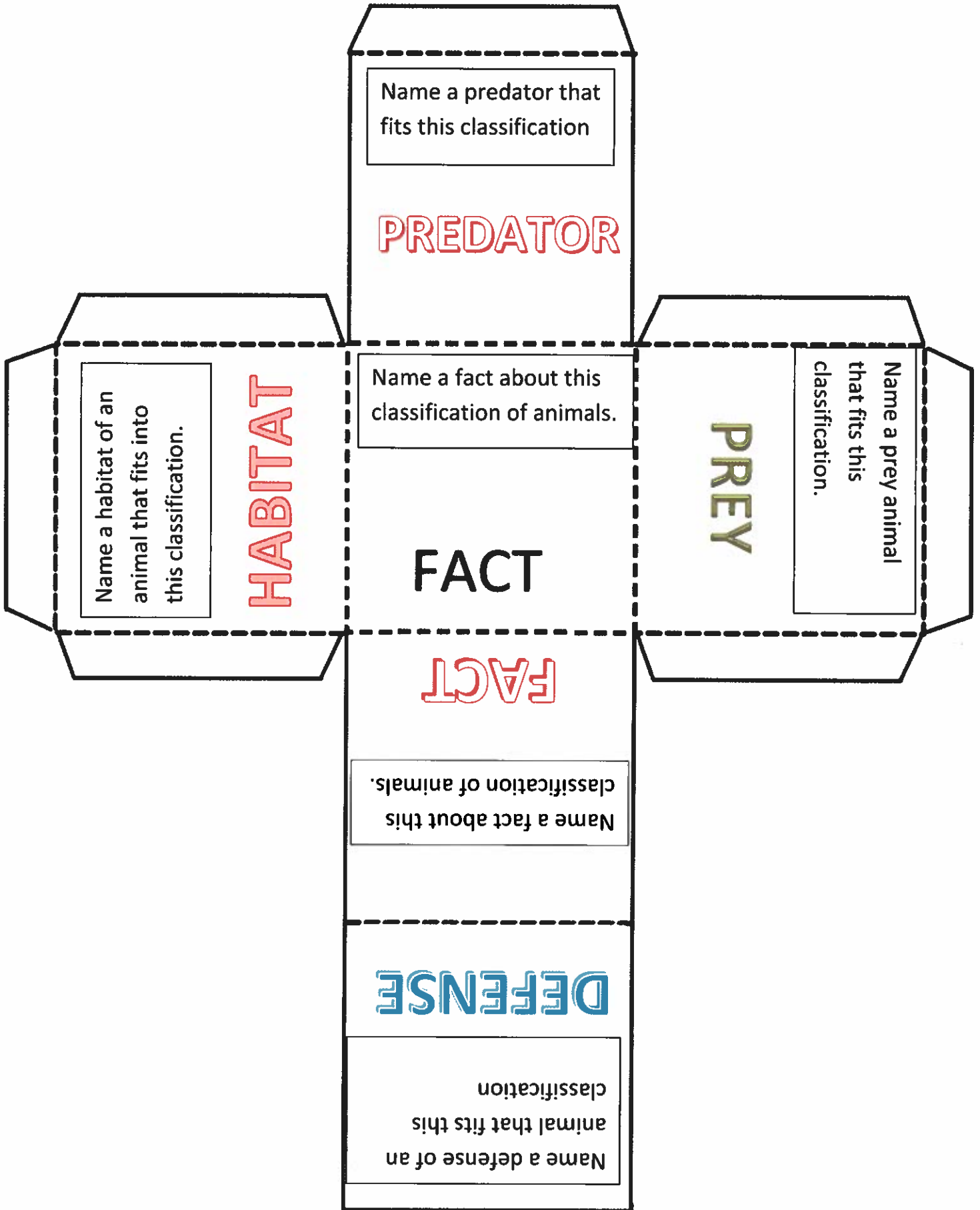
FISH



AMPHIBIANS

For best results, use cardstock. Cut on solid lines. Fold on dashed lines. Tuck folded edges under and use tape (or glue) to create a cube.

Cube Pattern



Feathers, Scales, Fur or Hair?

Subject: Science & Writing

Objective: Students will research different animal coverings and create a book to share.

Materials:

- bookmaking directions on the following page.
- scissors
- coloring tools

Procedure:

1. Review with students what kind of fur an American marten has and how helps it survive.
2. Ask students to think of other animals and their coverings. Spend time discussing how an animal's covering helps it to survive.
3. Tell students they will be creating a booklet to share information they've researched about animal coverings. Have each student choose an animal (or two) with the following covering: feathers, hair, fur and scales. Research each animal and find one or two facts related to their body coverings. How does it help them survive? Is it a different color? Does it change?
4. The booklet has eight pages. Have students plan out what they will put where. The front page should have a title. Include an "About the Author" on either the inside front page or at the back page. For each covering type, use at least one page. You will have extra pages, so possibly for one of them, use two pages. Be creative! For one of the last pages, you could have them list other animals with particular coverings. As the teacher, create a rubric to grade your specific objectives. It makes book grading much easier! You'll also get a better end product if students know how you'll be grading. ☺
5. When booklets are complete, meet with another class for partner sharing.



Directions for Making a Tiny Book

Materials:

- scissors
- paper bag or 12" X 18" construction paper

Directions are written for using a paper bag. If using construction paper, you can start with step three.

Steps One & Two:

- Lay the paper bag flat and take apart the bottom of the bag.
- Cut down one side of the bag on a fold and then cut off the bottom section.

Step three:

- You'll have a long rectangular sheet.
- Fold the bag over long ways so that the corners meet. Crease well and then unfold. Fold the paper over in the other direction, again placing the corners together. Do not unfold.

Step four:

- Take the *folded* side in your hand and fold in half one more time. Crease well and unfold so that you're at the previous step.

Step Five:

- Cut from **folded** side on the crease to the center.

Step Six:

- Open to full sheet. Fold lengthwise.
- Push outer edges together so a diamond forms in the middle of the book.

Step Seven:

Fold completely and crease well.

Note: After the writing and illustrating are complete, you may want to tape together the edges that do not have folds.

