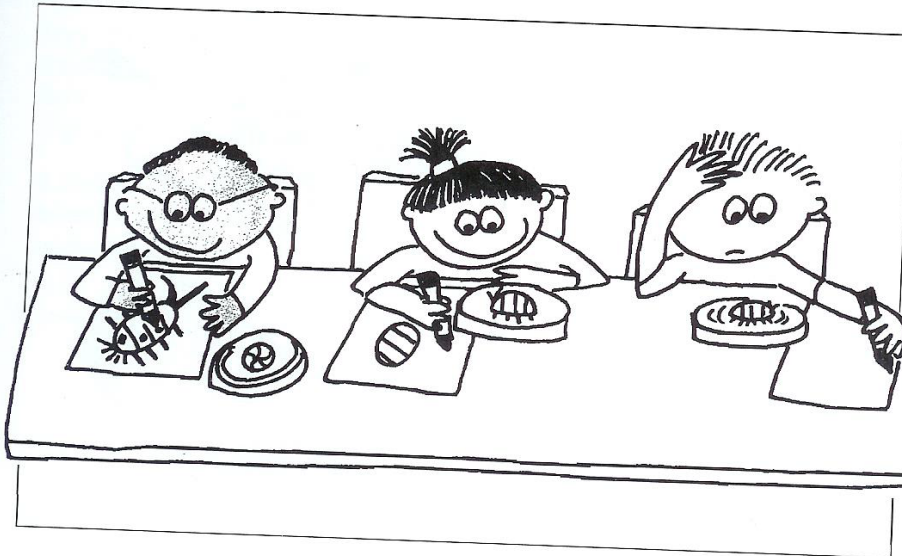# Animal Art

This model activity introduces students to drawing animals from life. It can be repeated with each animal the class explores.

Outcome

Students practice recording observations through drawing.

For the Teacher

Most kindergartners have had little experience drawing objects from life. Even when they mean to draw a specific tree, the result is apt to be an idealized stick of brown and splash of green. However, the more a child or anyone else practices the skill of looking at an object as they draw it, the more the subject will supply ideas and detail. Model this drawing process for your students, whatever your artistic ability. As you sketch, talk through the drawing, describing what you see as you draw it. The process of observing and drawing is what is important, not the product. The object is to open the child's eyes to detail and to the idea of drawing as a way of focusing. Kindergartners are at various levels of fine motor development, and you may not always recognize what they draw. By asking students about their drawings, you will discover the real depth of their awareness.

Indoor

Time
20 minutes, or until students lose interest

Related Subject
Art

Process Skills
Observing
Recording

Materials
For the Class:
(6–8 students at a time)
- 6–8 plastic lids from cottage cheese, margarine, or yogurt tubs
- 10–12 individuals of the animal to be investigated
- 6–8 magnifying lenses
- 6–8 sets of crayons or markers
- 1 set of markers
For Each Student:
- 2 8½" x 11" sheets newsprint or other drawing paper

Preparation

1. Place an animal in a plastic lid for each student.

2. Teach in teacher-directed groups of 6–8 students.

Getting Started

Review the shape, colors, and body parts of the animal. Elicit ideas about what parts of the animal students could show in a drawing.

If you drew a picture of a your animal, what could you show in the drawing? Would you draw that part big or small? What about your animal would be easy to draw? What would you have to look at very carefully so you could draw it?
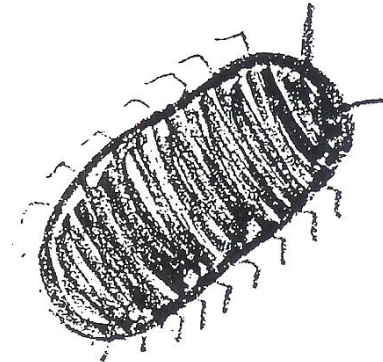

Action

1. Ask students to put their hands on their laps. Place an animal in front of each student. Ask them to look closely at the critter without touching it. Ask each to share what they notice about it with another student.

2. Demonstrate how to make a big picture of the animal so you can show details. Model how to look at the animal as you draw. Point out and then draw where the different parts of the animal connect to the main body.

3. Give students paper, crayons, and markers. Tell them that they can sketch as many pictures as they want. Encourage students to look at each others' pictures as they draw to get new ideas.

4. Continue sketching your animal as students sketch theirs.

5. When students are finished sketching, let them investigate the animal. Display or save student sketches for use in the class Animal Book (See Animal Book, p.208).

Assessment

Discuss the drawings as a way to observe.

Ask students to show the group their drawing, and tell what new things about the their animal they noticed and drew. **Did you notice anything new about your animal as you were drawing it? What?**

Digging Deeper

• Suggest that students paint pictures of the animals in their classroom home or garden habitat.

• Show students how to make collage pictures of the animals by cutting or tearing up bits of newspaper and gluing them together.

• Pour moist, fine-grained sand onto a dish or tray. Smooth it with a ruler. See what kind of tracks the animals leave in the sand. Put a sand tray in their habitat overnight and during the day to discover when they are most active.

4. Encourage students to draw pictures of the animals after looking at pictures or drawings of them in books or magazines.

Teacher Reflections

• Did students look at their animals as they drew them?

• Did the pictures reflect the shape, colors, body parts, or posture of the animals?

• How can drawing be used to improve students' observation skills?