
My Pet Rock

ECE Activity Plan

Activity #2: My Pet Rock

Duration: 60 mins

Subject: Science, Art, Literacy

Topic: Rocks and other Earth Materials

Overview

Learners explore their local environment and the many rocks that are found there using their senses of sight and touch. While doing this, they learn about the letter 'R'.

Aims/Objectives

- Describe different textures rocks can have (e.g. smooth, rough)
- Make a 'pet' out of a rock with art materials
- Recognize, write and sound out the letter 'R'

Materials

- Rocks of varying textures (smooth and rough)
- Flat round rocks for the art activity
- Tempura paint
- Googly eyes
- Glue
- Alphabet magnets (with many r/R's)
- Magnetic boards (or baking trays)
- White paper
- Crayons

Teacher Prep

- Collect a variety of different textured rocks.
- Collect a class set of flat round rocks for the art activity.
- Prepare a white board so that you can write the letter R on it.
- Choose a classroom book about rocks or find one of the following books:
 - *Let's Go Rock Collecting* by Roma Gans
 - *If Rocks Could Sing* by Leslie McGuirk
 - *A Rock Can Be* by Laura Salas
 - *Everybody Needs a Rock* by Byrd Baylor
- Prepare paint trays with colours, as well as paint brushes and googly eyes.
- Set up a station with individual magnetic boards or a few, large magnetic boards with some letters in the alphabet already on there. Add many magnets of the letter r/R for student sorting.

Background Information

This activity invites learners to explore rocks and gain important tactile and sensory connections to the different types of rock that exist globally and in the Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark (TRUGG). There are three main types of rocks:

- 1) igneous
- 2) sedimentary
- 3) metamorphic

Located where there was once an ancient inland sea (known as the Western Interior Seaway), the TRUGG consists mostly of sedimentary rock. These layered rocks are embedded with fossils and artifacts of the past, such as tyrannosaurus tracks. The TRUGG also has several areas with ancient metamorphic rock, dating back nearly 700 million years. Since there is a lack of past and present tectonic activity near the TRUGG, igneous rock is generally not found within the park.

Encourage learners to get tactile with the rock samples and consider their characteristics like colour, texture and 'hardness'. Prompt learners to consider how we might use rocks to make things we use everyday.

Please see the *Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark Teacher Backgrounder* for more background and details on the Geopark.

Activities

Introduction/Hook:

1. Ask learners to sit in the 'meeting place' in the classroom (e.g. the carpet). Explain to them that today we will be learning about our local environment by exploring the many different types of rocks there.
2. Pass around two rocks: one smooth and one rough. Ask learners to feel the texture of the rocks they are holding and then pass it on to the person next to them.
3. Have a brief discussion about what these rocks feel like.

Rock Stations:

1. Ask learners if they have ever noticed rocks outside. Ask them where they have seen rocks and what they look and feel like.
2. On a white board, ask if they can tell you what letter 'rock' begins with. Draw the letter 'R/r' and ask if anyone can name other words that start with this letter.
3. Divide the learners into three groups and preview the different stations/centres:
 - a. This station will have alphabet magnets on a board and learners need to pick out all of the letter R/r's and put them on one side.
 - b. At this station, learners can write the letter 'R' on a piece of white paper and draw things around the letter that begin with the letter 'R' (a discussion will likely be needed beforehand to help students come up with some 'R' words, i.e. rocket, rabbit, red, raspberry, etc.). The word 'rock' can also be written on a white board at this station and learners can attempt to write this word.
 - c. The final station will be an art station where learners will paint a flat circular rock a colour of their choosing and design it by painting dots in another colour. Once dry, they can glue on googly eyes (with teacher's assistance).
4. Ask groups to move to their first station/centre and complete the activities. Rotate groups when ready.

Closure:

1. Once learners have completed all the stations, ask them to meet at the carpet for a story about rocks. Read the storybook you have selected or one of the following:
 - *Let's Go Rock Collecting* by Roma Gans
 - *If Rocks Could Sing* by Leslie McGuirk
 - *A Rock Can Be* by Laura Salas
 - *Everybody Needs a Rock* by Byrd Baylor

Assessment/Evaluation

- Check for understanding by asking learners:
 - What letter does ROCK begin with? What other words start with this letter of the alphabet?
 - Where are rocks are found?
 - What do they look/feel like?

Extensions

- Invite learners to make up a story for their pet rock: Where did it come from? Does it have a family? What does it do every day? Where is it going in life?
- Lead your learners on an outdoor, experiential walkabout to look for rocks, great and small. Ask learners to consider which rocks they are curious about and why they are of interest. How could they learn more about these rocks?