A House For Hermit Crab

Grade Level

Pre-K – 4th

Objectives

* To be able to describe at least two different types of sea animals.

* To be able to define habitat and be able to give an example.

*To become familiar with hermit crabs and how they find shelter.

N.C. Standard Course of Study

Kindergarten
(K.L.1.1, K.L.1.2)

Grade 1
(1.L.1.1, 1.L.1.2)

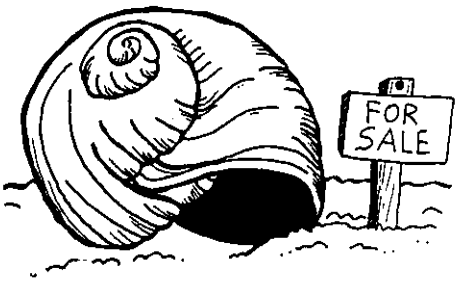
Grade 4
(4.L.1.1, 4.L.1.2, 4.L.1.3, 4.L.1.4)

Overview:

This activity is designed to show students the journey a hermit crab must make to find an empty shell for protection. The book, *A House For Hermit Crab*, wonderfully illustrates the adventure of a crab outgrowing his current shell and having to find another while all along the way making new friends. The hermit crab decorates its new shell with the various sea creatures it meets during its travels. After reading the story, students will have the opportunity to decorate a hermit crab's shell and/or illustrate the different animals within their habitats that it visits in its journey to find a bigger shell.

Materials:

- A House For Hermit Crab by Eric Carle
- large sheets of paper for illustrating
- construction paper
- glue
- markers
- scissors
- yarn
- glitter
- crayons



Background:

Hermit crabs are not considered true crabs because their exoskeleton, the hard external shell, covers only the front half of their bodies. Hermit crabs need to find empty shells of whelks, periwinkles, and other mollusks to protect the soft, vulnerable portions of their bodies. When hermit crabs outgrow one shell, they seek a bigger one. Hermit crab's shells often have algae, sea anemones and barnacles living on them.

Activity:

1. Read A House For Hermit Crab aloud to your students. After reading the book, discuss the habitats described in the book associated

with each animal the hermit crab comes upon. Show your students the corresponding pictures that depict how:

- the hermit crab sheds his smaller shells for bigger shells.
- starfish moved along the sea floor.
- corals build hard skeletons that form coral reefs.
- each snail had a shell of their own and lived on a rock on the bottom of the ocean floor.
- Lanternfish darted through the seaweed.
- the hermit crab rearranged pebbles to protect the shell.

With the students working individually or in small groups, have them choose a sea animal from the book and create the animal in its habitat with construction paper, scissors, glue, yarn and markers. Encourage creativity.

OR

2. Read A House For Hermit Crab aloud to your students. After reading the book, discuss how the hermit crab decorated his home and made it his own. Give each student a copy of the hermit crab coloring sheet. Have the students decorate it with markers, crayons, glue and pieces of construction paper. Encourage creativity.

Extension:

- Have students write stories about their sea animals and habitat.
- Set up an aquarium for hermit crabs. Have students make observations of the crabs' behavior. Make a list of the different behaviors your students observe and discuss how these behaviors help the crabs survive.
- Have students bring in empty shells from home and decorate those.

Vocabulary:

- hermit crab
- habitat
- house
- plankton
- shell
- skeleton
- snail
- starfish
- coral

References:

Carle, E. 1991. A House For Hermit Crab. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, New York. 32 pgs. (ISBN: 978-0887080562)

National Science Standards:

Content Standards	*Science as inquiry. [K-4]*
	Life science. [K-4]

Ocean Literacy Principles:

Essential Principle #5	*The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems. (Fundamental concepts-a, d,)*

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Hermit Crab Coloring Sheet