

Eyes and Ears at the Zoo

Second Grade Experience

Program Overview

Introduction

Second graders from St. Louis Public Schools coming to the Zoo this year will have an experience tailored just for them. The focus will be on eyes and ears, their own and the animals they will be paying special attention to. Sometimes students will be asked to observe the eyes and ears of animals and at other times, they will be encouraged to use their own eyes and ears to learn about the animals. The accompanying adults will need to facilitate these interactions for maximum effect on student learning.

The elements of this experience will include a manual for the teacher and adult chaperones that will include way-finding directions and prompts to focus student attention, a student journal, and background information with pre- and post-activities and extensions. All of these are included in this PDF.

Background Information

All living organisms have senses that are specially adapted to help them survive. Some of these adaptations are very unique and unusual and others, so common as to go unnoticed except under careful observation. During this on-grounds investigation, students and grownups alike will need to be extra alert in order to spot these adaptations.

Sometimes, students will be asked to compare particular physical or behavioral adaptations between animals they will see, so it will be important for adults to pre-read their manuals in order to know when to warn students about upcoming comparisons since the animals may not be in the same enclosures.

For adults, there will be a simple glossary at the end of their manual, but it is a reference for their understanding and explanation, not something the students must learn.

Goals

- Students will observe and listen to the animals
- Students to be especially attentive to the eyes and ears of the animals
- Students will make comparisons between different animals in relation to what they see and hear.

Materials

Copies of the student journal should be made at school well ahead of time. Teachers can even “walk” the students through their journals ahead of time so they know what to expect when they get to the Zoo. Students can have personal copies or they can work in pairs. Clip boards would be helpful and pencils with erasers are a must. Be sure to bring extras.

The adult manual will include a map with all sites marked and a suggested route to follow. However, since there will be construction going on in the central part of the Zoo throughout the school year, it would be wise to check before coming in order to determine whether paths are open or areas need to be avoided. All the sites will be available but the approaches may need special navigation.

Pre- and post-activities/extensions

In order to make the Zoo experience a memorable and effective learning experience, it is important to prepare for it and to follow up after it. Materials for both of these possibilities will be included.

Other resources are listed on the website and available for loan at

<http://www.stlzoo.org/education/forteachers/teacherresourcesandopportu.htm>

Suggestions for Teachers

- 1.** Allow your students about 60-70 minutes for this scavenger hunt. The exhibit areas covered in this hunt include Penguin and Puffin Coast, Cypress Swamp, Red Rocks, Bird House, Primate House and the Insectarium.
- 2.** Divide the class into groups of four or five students with an adult to help each group. This scavenger hunt is intended to be adult led. There are hints throughout the hunt to help the adult steer the children through the exercises. Students will complete their answers in their student journal.
- 3.** Because the animals at the Zoo are living creatures with very special needs, some of the animals referred to in this scavenger hunt may not always be on public display. **Please remind adults/students to do their best to complete the hunt by carefully observing the animals they find.**