

Teaching Activity Guide  
for  
*Anybody Home?*



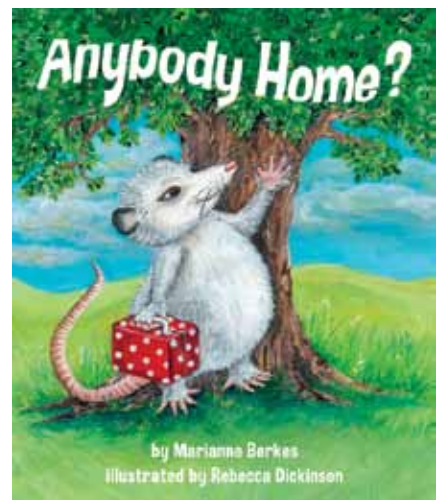
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illustrated by Rebecca Dickinson

# How to Use This Activity Guide (General)

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There are a wide variety of activities that teach or supplement all curricular areas. The activities are easily adapted up or down depending on the age and abilities of the children involved. And, it is easy to pick and choose what is appropriate for your setting and the time involved. Most activities can be done with an individual child or a group of children.

**For teachers in the classroom:** We understand that time is at a premium and that, especially in the early grades, much time is spent teaching language arts. All Arbordale titles are specifically selected and developed to get children excited about learning other subjects (science, geography, social studies, math, etc.) while reading (or being read to). These activities are designed to be as comprehensive and cross-curricular as possible. If you are teaching sentence structure in writing, why not use sentences that teach science or social studies? We also know and understand that you must account for all activities done in the classroom. While each title is aligned to all of the state standards (both the text and the For Creative Minds), it would be near impossible to align all of these activities to each state's standards at each grade level. However, we do include some of the general wording of the CORE language arts and math standards, as well as some of the very general science or social studies standards. You'll find them listed as "objectives" in italics. You should be able to match these objectives with your state standards fairly easily.

**For homeschooling parents and teachers in private schools:** Use as above. Aren't you glad you don't have to worry about state standards?

**For parents/caregivers:** Two of the most important gifts you can give your child are the love of reading and the desire to learn. Those passions are instilled in your child long before he or she steps into a classroom. Many adults enjoy reading historical fiction novels . . . fun to read but also to learn (or remember) about historical events. Not only does Arbordale publish stories that are fun to read and that can be used as bedtime books or quiet "lap" reading books, but each story has non-fiction facts woven through the story or has some underlying educational component to sneak in "learning." Use the "For Creative Minds" section in the book itself and these activities to expand on your child's interest or curiosity in the subject. They are designed to introduce a subject so you don't need to be an expert (but you will probably look like one to your child!). Pick and choose the activities to help make learning fun!

**For librarians and bookstore employees; after-school program leaders; and zoo, aquarium, nature center, park & museum educators:** Whether reading a book for story time or using the book to supplement an educational program, feel free to use the activities in your programs. We have done the "hard part" for you.



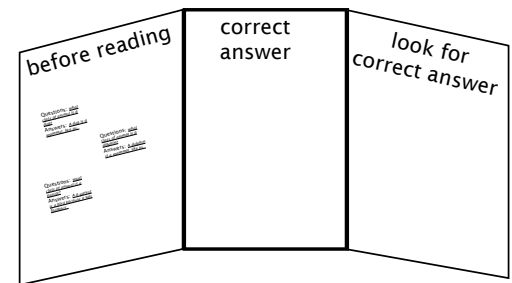
# What Do Children Already Know?

Young children are naturally inquisitive and are sponges for information. The whole purpose of this activity is to help children verify the information they know (or think they know) and to get them thinking “beyond the box” about a particular subject.

Before reading the book, ask the children what they know about the subject. A list of suggested questions is below. The children should write down their “answers” (or adults for them if the children are not yet writing) on the chart found in Appendix A, index cards, or post-it notes.

Their answers should be placed on a “before reading” panel. If doing this as a group, you could use a bulletin board or even a blackboard. If doing this with individual children, you can use a plain manila folder with the front cover the “before reading” panel. Either way, you will need two more panels or sections—one called “correct answer” and the other “look for correct answer.”

Do the children have any more questions about the subject? If so, write them down to see if they are answered in the book.



After reading the book, go back to the questions and answers and determine whether the children’s answers were correct or not.

If the answer was correct, move that card to the “correct answer” panel. If the answer was incorrect, go back to the book to find the correct information.

If the child/children have more questions that were not answered, they should look them up.

When an answer has been found and corrected, the card can be moved to the “correct answer” panel.

# Pre-Reading Questions

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What are some animal “homes?”

How do you think the animals get their homes?

If they build a home, what are some of the things they use to make it?

Why do animals live in homes?

Do all animals make their own homes?

What does an opossum look like?

Where do opossums live?

What are some names for different kinds of animal homes?

Can you think of different materials humans use to build (or make) their homes? (bricks, wood, stone, metal, clay, glass.) Also what is the house you live in made of?

## Idioms

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The author used a number of “idioms” in this story for a play on words. Do you know what an idiom is, and can you find any? Do you know any other idioms?

- Bug off!
- A honey of a place!
- Making a mountain out of a molehill
- I’m kind of night owl.
- Drive me batty!
- I’m really in a pinch



# Anybody Home?



1. If Polly came to your home, would you let her live with you?
2. Which home did you like the best?
3. If you were Polly, where would you choose to live?
4. What were some of the different animal homes?
5. What does your home look like?
6. Have you ever moved houses? What was the hardest part about moving?
7. Is Polly a diurnal or nocturnal animal?



# Observation Skills: Art Scavenger Hunt

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*Objective Core Language Arts Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).*

*Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.*

*Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).*

*Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.*

What kinds of insects do you think Sammy Spider caught in his trap?

How many eggs are in Robbie's nest?

Can you find the queen bee in Becky Bee's hive?

What did Polly think Timmy Turtle's shell was?

What does Milton Mole have in his mouth?

How many beavers are swimming in the pond?

What did Freddy Fox have in his mouth while he ran past Polly playing possum?

How many kits does Freddy Fox have?

How does Billy Bat hang in the cave?

What was Suzy gathering when she left her drey?

What was Woody Woodpecker doing as Polly approached the hollow?

How many joeys did Polly have? Do you see them in her pouch?

Can you describe Polly's suitcase?

# Language Arts & Science: Basic Needs

*Objective: Describe the basic needs of living things and how they are met.*

*Plants need water, oxygen, food, light and space to grow and reproduce; animals need water, oxygen, food, and shelter/space to grow and reproduce.*

Re-read the story and write down any words that relate to how the plants or animal(s) meet their basic needs.

<b>Plant/ Animal</b>	<b>water</b>	<b>oxygen</b>	<b>food</b>	<b>light</b>	<b>space</b>

If not mentioned in the text, are there any indications in the illustrations of how these needs are met? Can you describe, draw, or write an explanation of how the needs are met?



# Language Arts: Readers' Theater

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Assign each reading part to a child. Fill in the script with dialogue from the book and enact a play of the story. Costumes or masks always make a great addition!

*Objective Core Language Arts:*

*Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.*

Who is reading each role?

Narrator:

Polly:

Sammy:

Robin:

Becky:

Timmy:

Milton:

Betty:

Billy:

Suzy:

Narrator: Polly 'Possum needed a home. She looked up at the busy oak tree.  
Was there room for her?

As Polly climbed up the tree, she stepped on something sticky.

Sammy: "Hey, watch it! \_\_\_\_\_"

\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_?

Sammy: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ So, bug off!

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_!

Sammy: \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_?

Sammy: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ We all build our homes differently!

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sammy: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: Sammy checked out an insect that was caught in the sticky part of his trap.

Polly: Anybody home?

Robbie: Shoooo! \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_

Robbie: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: Just then Becky Bee buzzed by.

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_. Anybody home?

Becky: My, yes! \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: It's a honey of a home, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Becky: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ She may still be gathering nuts, but \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: Polly sat on a rock and waited for Suzy Squirrel. Timmy Turtle poked out his head.

Timmy: \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: Oops! \_\_\_\_\_?

Timmy: I carry my home on my back. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: I won't hurt you. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Timmy: Go down to the pond! \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: On the way to the beaver dam, Polly saw something moving in the ground.

Polly: Anybody home?

Milton: Go away! \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: It's still summer! \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Milton: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: Milton slurped up an earthworm that had fallen through the roof of his tunnel.

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Thanks anyway!

Polly: Anybody home?

Betty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: As Polly headed for the busy tree, a fox ran by. Polly immediately threw herself on the ground and pretended she was dead. Luckily, Freddy Fox went right by her into his den. Polly didn't ask if anybody was at home!

It was almost dawn when Polly noticed some bats flying into a cave.

Polly: Anybody home?

Billy: Scat! \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: It was dawn when Polly arrived at the oak tree. She noticed a nest of twigs and bark lined with dead leaves. Something was moving inside!

Polly: Anybody home?

Suzy: \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Suzy: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Suzy: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrator: Polly looked up. Woody was flying away!

Polly: Anybody home?

Narrator: No answer! Polly moved into the abandoned hollow and slept all day.

That night, twelve babies were born! Whew!

THE END

# Word Search

Find the hidden words. Even non-reading children can match letters to letters to find the words! Easy—words go up to down or left to right (no diagonals). For older children, identify the coordinates of the first letter in each word (letter, number).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	H	O	M	E	U	N	D	E	R	K
2	A	F	O	X	W	D	I	G	Z	I
3	B	L	P	D	A	V	S	D	L	T
4	I	Z	O	A	K	T	R	E	E	C
5	T	O	S	X	N	U	L	N	N	A
6	A	R	S	P	I	N	V	O	X	S
7	T	R	U	S	B	N	J	E	V	A
8	Q	O	M	F	W	E	E	W	E	B
9	S	H	S	O	I	L	U	Q	T	E
10	B	U	R	R	O	W	J	E	D	N

---, --- Burrow  
---, --- Den  
---, --- Dig  
---, --- Fox  
---, --- Habitat  
---, --- Home

---, --- Kit  
---, --- Oak Tree  
---, --- Opossum  
---, --- Spin  
---, --- Tunnel  
---, --- Web

# Classifying Animals

*Objective: Classify organisms according to one selected feature, such as body covering, and identify other similarities shared by organisms within each group formed.*

*Describe several external features and behaviors of animals that can be used to classify them (e.g., size, color, shape of body parts).*

*Identify observable similarities and differences (e.g., number of legs, body coverings, size) between/among different groups of animals.*

Just as we sort candy, scientists sort all living things into groups to help us understand and connect how things relate to each other. Scientists ask questions to help them sort or classify animals.

Based on the answers to the questions, scientists can sort the living organisms. The first sort is into a Kingdom. There are five commonly accepted Kingdoms: Monera, Protista, Fungi, Plantae, and Animalia. All of the living things in this book belong to Animalia or the Animal Kingdom.

The next big sort is into a Phylum. One of the first questions that a scientist will ask is whether the animal has (or had at some point in its life) a backbone. If the answer is “yes,” the animal is a vertebrate. If the answer is “no,” the animal is an invertebrate.

Each Phylum is broken down into Classes, like mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, insects, or gastropods (snails). Then each class can be broken down even further into orders, families, genus and species, getting more specific.



The scientific name is generally in Latin or Greek and is the living thing’s genus and species. People all over the world use the scientific names, no matter what language they speak. Most living organisms also have a common name that we use in our own language.

Some questions scientists ask:



- Does it have a backbone?
- What type of skin covering does it have?
- Does it have a skeleton? If so, is it inside or outside of the body?
- How many body parts does the animal have?
- Does it get oxygen from the air through lungs or from the water through gills?
- Are the babies born alive or do they hatch from eggs?
- Does the baby drink milk from its mother?
- Is it warm-blooded or cold-blooded?

Using what you know, and information and pictures in the book, see how many Animal Chart squares you can fill in for each animal.

# Animal Chart

	Animals		
<b>Appendages</b>	legs (how many)		
	flippers/fins		
	wings		
	tail/no tail		
	horns/antlers		
<b>Feet or hands: if they have; may have more than one</b>	claws		
	web		
	toes		
	opposable thumbs/toes		
	hooves		
<b>Movement: may do more than one</b>	walks/runs		
	crawls		
	flies		
	slithers		
	swims		
	climbs		
	hops		
<b>Backbone</b>	backbone/vertebrate		
	no backbone/invertebrate		
<b>Skeleton</b>	inside skeleton (endoskeleton)		
	outside skeleton (exoskeleton)		
	no skeleton		
<b>Body covering</b>	hair/fur/whiskers/quills		
	feathers		
	dry scales or bony plates		
	moist scales		
	smooth, moist skin		
	hard outer shell		
<b>Color/patterns</b>	stripes or spots		
	mostly one color		
	skin color changes		
	bright, vivid colors		
<b>Gets oxygen</b>	lungs		
	gills		
<b>Body temperature</b>	warm-blooded (endothermic)		
	cold-blooded (ectothermic)		
<b>Babies</b>	born alive		
	hatch from eggs		
	born alive or hatch from eggs		
<b>Metamorphosis</b>	complete		
	incomplete		
	none		
<b>Teeth</b>	sharp		
	flat		
	no teeth (bill/beak)		
<b>Food</b>	plant eater (herbivore)		
	meat eater (carnivore)		
	both (omnivore)		



	Animals		
<b>Appendages</b>	Legs (how many)		
	flippers/fins		
	wings		
	tail/no tail		
	horns/antlers		
<b>Feet or hands: if they have, may have more than one</b>	claws		
	web		
	toes		
	opposable thumbs/toes		
	hooves		
<b>Movement: may have more than one</b>	walks/runs		
	crawls		
	flies		
	slithers		
	swims		
	climbs		
	hops		
<b>Backbone</b>	backbone/vertebrate		
	no backbone/invertebrate		
<b>Skeleton</b>	inside skeleton (endoskeleton)		
	outside skeleton (exoskeleton)		
	no skeleton		
<b>Body covering</b>	hair/fur/whiskers/quills		
	feathers		
	dry scales or bony plates		
	moist scales		
	smooth, moist skin		
	hard outer shell		
<b>Color/patterns</b>	stripes or spots		
	mostly one color		
	skin color changes		
	bright, vivid colors		
<b>Gets oxygen</b>	lungs		
	gills		
<b>Body Temperature</b>	warm-blooded (endothermic)		
	cold-blooded (ectothermic)		
<b>Babies</b>	born alive		
	hatch from eggs		
	born alive or hatch from eggs		
<b>Metamorphis?</b>	complete		
	incomplete		
	none		
<b>Teeth</b>	sharp		
	flat		
	no teeth (bill/beak)		
<b>Food</b>	plant eaters (herbivore)		
	meat eater (carnivore)		
	both (omnivore)		

# Compare/Contrast: Animal and Human Senses

*Objective Core Language Literature 4: Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.*

*Students know that senses can provide essential information (regarding danger, food, mates, etc.) to animals about their environment.*

*Identify the five senses and their related body parts: sight - eyes, hearing - ears, smell - nose, taste - tongue, touch - skin,*

*Identify the structures of living organisms and explain their function.*

Compare and contrast animal and human body parts used for senses.

to smell	to feel
to hear	to see

# Animal Sorting Cards

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*Objective: Classify organisms according to one selected feature, such as body covering, and identify other similarities shared by organisms within each group formed.*

*Describe several external features and behaviors of animals that can be used to classify them (e.g., size, color, shape of body parts).*

*Identify observable similarities and differences (e.g., number of legs, body coverings, size) between/among different groups of animals.*

## Animal Card Games:

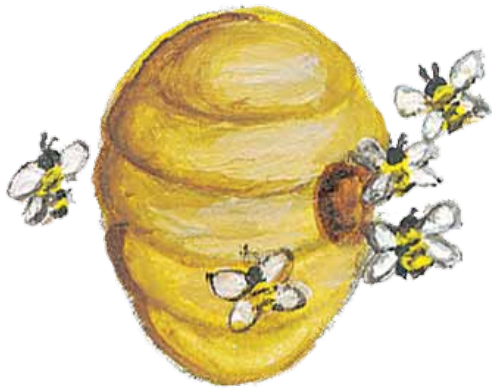
**Sorting:** Depending on the age of the children, have them sort cards by:

where the animals live (habitat)	tail, no tail
number of legs (if the animals have legs)	colors or skin patterns
how they move (walk, swim, jump, or fly)	animal class
type of skin covering (hair/fur, feathers, scales, moist skin)	
what they eat (plant eaters/herbivores, meat eaters/carnivores, both/omnivores)	

**Memory Card Game:** Make two copies of each of the sorting card pages and cut out the cards. Mix them up and place them face down on a table. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards so that everyone can see. If the cards match, he or she keeps the pair and takes another turn. If they do not match, the player should turn the cards back over and it is another player's turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

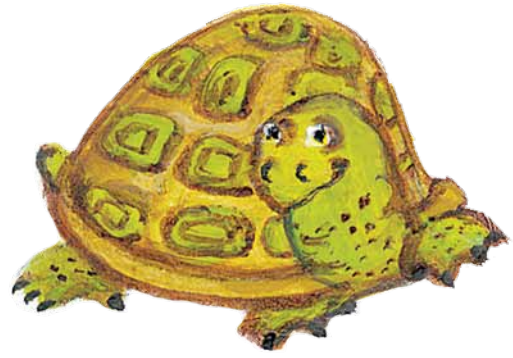
**Who Am I?** Copy and cut out the cards. Poke a hole through each one and tie onto a piece of yarn. Have each child put on a "card necklace" without looking at it so the card hangs down the back. The children get to ask each person one "yes/no" question to try to guess "what they are." If a child answering the question does not know the answer, he/she should say, "I don't know." This is a great group activity and a great "ice-breaker" for children who don't really know each other.

**Charades:** One child selects a card and must act out what the animal is so that the other children can guess. The actor may not speak but can move like the animal and imitate body parts or behaviors. For very young children, you might let them make the animal sound. The child who guesses the animal becomes the next actor.









Pick an animal from the book and answer the following questions:  
My animal is:

<p>Where (in what kind of habitat) does your animal live?</p>	<p>What is one of its physical adaptations and how does it help the animal live in its environment?</p>
<p>What is another of its physical adaptations and how does it help the animal live in its environment?</p>	<p>What is another of its physical adaptations and how does it help the animal live in its environment?</p>

What behavioral adaptations (if any) were mentioned in the story?

# Science Journal (Vocabulary)

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## Burrow

my definition

my drawing

## Nest

my definition

my drawing



# Shell

my definition

my drawing

# Drey

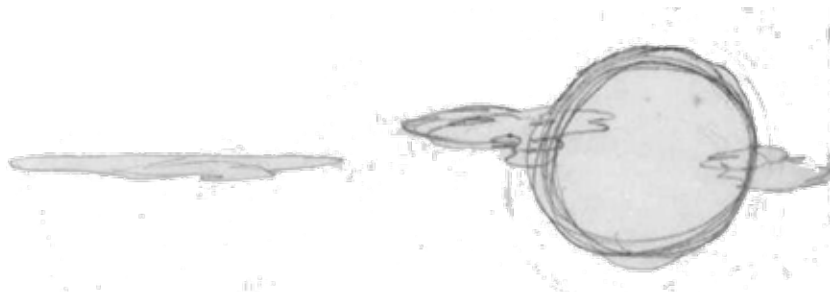
my definition

my drawing

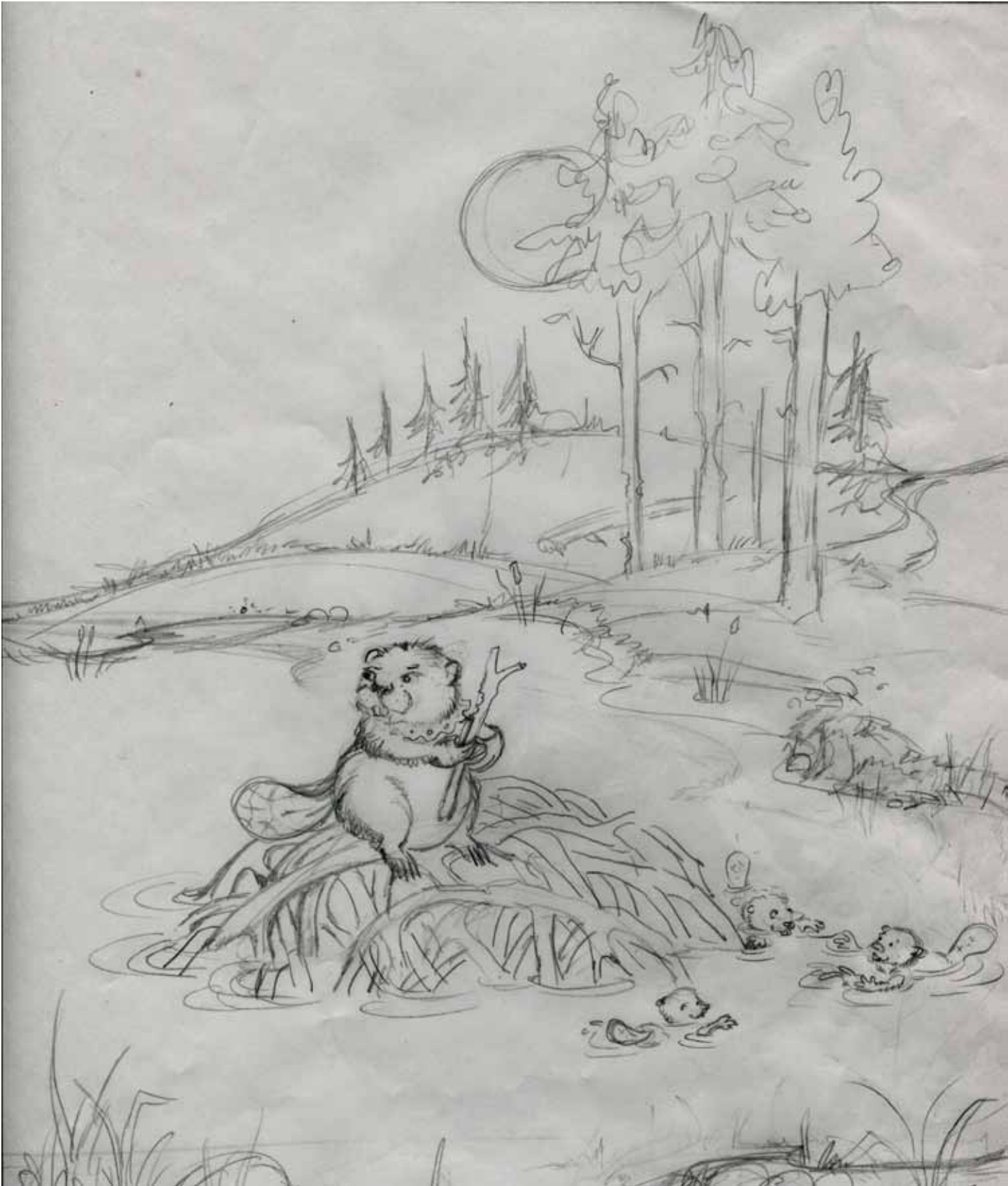
# Coloring Pages

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# Answers

## Answers: Word Search

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	H	O	M	E						K
2	A	F	O	X		D	I	G		I
3	B		P		A	V	S	D		T
4	I		O		K	T	R	E	E	
5	T		S		N	U	L	N	N	
6	A		S	P	I	N	V	O	X	
7	T		U		B	N	J	E	V	
8			M		W	E	E	W	E	B
9			S		I	L	U	Q	T	
10	B	U	R	R	O	W				

A,10

H,3

F,2

B,2

A,1

A,1

J,1

C,4

C,2

C,6

F,4

H,8

Burrow

Den

Dig

Fox

Habitat

Home

Kit

Oak Tree

Opossum

Spin

Tunnel

Web

# Appendix A—“What Children Know” Cards

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<p>Question:</p>          <p>My answer:</p>          <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>	<p>Question:</p>          <p>My answer:</p>          <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>
<p>Question:</p>          <p>My answer:</p>          <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>	<p>Question:</p>          <p>My answer:</p>          <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>



# Appendix B—Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast two animals in this book.

