

The Exploring Nature Collection For Older Students

Learning Magic, Inc., announces the Exploring Nature Collection for Older Students, a new offering in the Adapted Stories series, which we have produced in collaboration with Pati King-DeBaun of Creative Communicating. Each collection includes ten study units. This new Exploring Nature Collection targets older, developmentally delayed students (grade 3 and up) who for whatever reason are just beginning to learn to read. Each of the units has three main components for emergent literacy: Learn About It, Read About It, and Write About It. More specific descriptions of the topics for each of the units in the Exploring Nature Collection follow this discussion.

The Learn About It component introduces students to a topic that they can explore while absorbing and becoming familiar with the vocabulary of that subject. For the Exploring Nature Collection, Learning Magic, Inc. has created interactive adventure stories for each unit. Multimedia elements and full-color photos add vivid reality to these virtual environments. A short comprehension activity and off-computer materials accompany the adventure story.

The Read About It component includes on-computer stories similar to those in previous collections, with several choices for students at the emergent literacy level. These include stories with simple easy to read text, and stories with more difficult text for students beginning to read, and stories for conventional readers. The themes and vocabulary for these stories relate back to the adventure story for each unit, and full-color photos and in some cases added sounds make these stories special. A cloze activity based on the higher level story enables teachers to test if students are really reading the text. Again, support materials including ready to print stories and support symbols for the easy level story round out this section.

The Write About It component includes a selection of writing activities, including word play and errorless writing, as well as story-based activities.

The Adventure Stories: A New Way To “Learn About It”

Learning Magic, Inc. brings a very special experience to the Learn About It section of each unit in the form of an interactive, multimedia story. Whether the explored environment is fictional or factual, students have a chance to

choose their own route as they explore. Each page leads to two choices of where to go next. There can be eight different outcomes to a story. At each endpoint, students have the choice to go back and take another route. Appropriate sounds, movies, and animation contribute to immerse the child in each story environment. Students learn about the physical aspects of each environment, become familiar with its inhabitants, and also learn about the consequences of various choices, as they pick up the vocabulary associated with each story.

Please find below a short synopsis of each adventure story and the associated reading stories, along with some additional website references which you may want to visit to obtain additional instructional materials or to gain further insights into specific environments. One such resource is the Learning Magic, Inc. site, which has free activities to download in the Goodies section. The titles of activities from the Learning Magic, Inc. site that may be of interest are noted at the end of each synopsis. To find these easily, click the Goodies button on the website and then click the appropriate category, Math, Science, or Language Arts, or click the Search button and enter the title you want to find.

The synopses are arranged in the suggested order of use for the ten units.

Synopses of the Ten Units of Exploring Nature Collection

A Zoo Adventure

In this set of activities children take a virtual field trip to the zoo and learn about a wide variety of animals that they may see at the zoo. In each case the child will be introduced to two or three facts about that animal.

Animals include but are not limited to orangutans, holler monkeys, komodo dragons, gorillas, elephants, giraffes and tapirs to mention a few.

Students can consolidate their animal lore by reading *Animals at the Zoo*, *Wild Animals*, and *In The Zoo*. Rimes in this unit: at, ig.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

<http://animal.discovery.com>

www.sandiegozoo.org

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/default.cfm>

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: If I Had To Name This Animal, Mr. Lion What Did You Hear?

An Ocean Adventure

In this set of activities children take a trip to the ocean and the beach. They experience the shoreline at both high and low tide. They are also introduced to and explore the impact on the animals and plants of the changing tides.

They meet many inhabitants of the shoreline including shorebirds, crabs, clams, seaweed, and kelp to mention a few. When they return to school, they can read about High Tide - Low Tide, At The Ocean Shore, and On The Beach. Rimes in this unit: an, on.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.abc.net.au/oceans/alive.htm

www.mos.org/oceans

www.onr.navy.mil/focus/ocean/life.default.html

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Ecosystems, Beach Addition to 9

African Photo Safari

Students bring their imaginations instead of cameras to go on a virtual photo safari to the savannas of Africa. Children notice that the savanna is a very hot and dry environment most of the year. This climate results in various adaptations by both plants and animals due to the lack of water.

Children meet the animals that live in the savanna including the lion and the cheetah, water buffalo, warthogs, hippopotamus and saddle bill storks to mention a few. When they return to the classroom, they will continue their African experience by reading about Life in the Savanna, Who Is It? and African Animals. Rimes in this unit: it, ip.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.blueplanetbiomes.org/savanna.htm

www.africanguide.com

www.bushfeld.co.za

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Subtraction in the Savanna

A Woods Adventure

In this story, students go with James on a fictional visit to the woods. James takes a walk, and right away the children must help him decide whether to go deep into the woods or to walk along a river bordering and running through the woods. In his travels James encounters various inhabitants, and some of them are quite a surprise. In one situation, he gets lost and ends up talking to a porcupine who is actually a wizard. In another case, he rescues a trapped river otter.

As James and the student explore, the child is introduced to the features of the woods and begins to learn about this environment. Inhabitants encountered include slugs, deer, a bear, a porcupine and chipmunks to mention a few.

After finding their way back home, students can recall their woods experiences by reading Who Can Talk, In The Woods, and What Can I See. Rhymes in this unit: in, ug.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/glossary/gloss5/biome/forests.html

<http://mbgnet.mobot.org/sets/temp>

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: A Squirrel (Easy Writing), Slugs and Snails, Addition In The Woods

Coral Reef Adventure

Children visit a coral reef and learn about how the reef is actually formed by animals that encrust together. Children find that the reef is full of life twenty-four hours a day, and that various animals are out moving about at specific times. Each animal is in search of food and shelter.

Inhabitants of the reef the students encounter include fish, eels, the octopus, sea urchins and sea anemones, clown fish and sharks, to mention a few. Once they dry off back in the classroom, students read about Life on the Coral Reef, On The Reef, and The Coral Reef. Rimes in this unit: ake, ide.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.npca.org/marine

www.reef.edu.au

www.seasky.org/reeflife

Northlands (includes the tundra and northern marine mammals)

In this adventure, a child explores the cold harsh environment of the tundra and northern coastlines. Environmental conditions include permafrost and frozen ground, so make sure students dress warmly. They will notice the effect of the cold on the forest, such as the thin tall trees due to severe weather conditions and the lack of new growth and foliage each year.

As they explore, students encounter northern fur seals, the walrus, caribou, moose, grizzly bears, polar bears and mountain goats to mention a few. Students learn about the animals' adaptations, including the importance of fat, fur and hair in the animals' survival. After warming up a bit following their adventure, students read about Fat, Hair, and Fur, Northland Sounds, and Furry and Fat. Rimes in this unit: ot, op.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.ths.sps.lane.edu

www.Mbgnet.mobot.org/sets/tundra

<http://Nmml.afsc.noas.gov/education/marinemammals.htm>

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Ice and Icicles, The Migration, American Bald Eagles, Marine Mammals, Ecosystems

Wetlands

Wetlands are a very important ecosystem and need to be protected. In this story children explore several basic types of wetlands, including marshes and swamps. They will also be introduced to turtles, dragonflies, damselflies, frogs and toads, red-winged blackbirds and herons, just to mention a few of the inhabitants that they will meet in the wetlands. After exploring, students can continue their wetlands experience as they read about Life in the Wetlands, Wetlands Animals, and Wetlands Sounds.

Rimes in this unit: ack, uck.

Additional websites that may be of further interest include:

www.wetlands.epa.org

www.wetlands.fws.gov

<http://Edtech.kennesaw.edu> (this site has many links on it to other wetland reference sites.)

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Pond Fractions, Dragonflies and Damselflies, Chain Reaction, and Ecosystems

A Space Adventure

Students use their imaginations in this fictional trip to far away planets. They ride with Captain Bernard as he blasts off into space in his spaceship to visit two distant galaxies. In his travels, they encounter various aliens and visit different planets and environments, some arid and some wet.

Captain Bernard's travels include encountering meteor showers and weather disturbances, entering into cloud layer planets, and also being met by a wide variety of beings, each with different intentions and reactions to his being on their planet. After returning to Earth, students read about An Odd Planet, In Space, and Into Space. Rimes in this unit: ame, ain.

For another chance to write about the adventures of Captain Bernard, visit www.learningmagicinc.com and download **Captain Bernard**.

For additional websites that may provide you with information on real space environments, you may want to visit:

www.nineplanets.org

www.kidsastronomy.com
www.sciencemonster.com/planets.htm

Tropical Rainforest

The children explore the hot wet climate of a tropical rainforest. They will be shown where tropical rainforests are located and take a tour of the rainforest's dense growth. They learn about the multiple layers of the rainforest and the animals that live and thrive in each layer.

Animals that they will meet and learn about include the green vine snake, the jaguar, the peccary, the yellow spotted neck turtle and the toucan to mention a few. Once they are back in the air-conditioned classroom, students read about In the Tropical Rainforest, Bird or Animal, and Rainforest Bird. Rimes in this unit: est, ate.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.blueplanetbiomes.org/rainforest.htm
www.mongobay.com
www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet
www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Butterflies, Ecosystems

A Desert Adventure

Students head for the hot, dry part of the world to take a walk with Maggie through a desert park. She is supposed to make observations to write a report for school. There are many forks in the trail, so students will have to help Maggie decide where to go. Along the way they see various features of the desert landscape, including sand dunes, layered rock, and lava. They also find that there are interesting plants growing in these harsh conditions, including yucca and juniper. The animals of the desert speak to Maggie and tell her about the native people who lived in the desert long ago. The exploring student and Maggie discover that the desert is full of life, including ravens, cactus wrens, tortoises, lizards, foxes, jackrabbits, spiders, snakes, scorpions, and many more creatures. Throughout the story, Native American flute music adds to the desert experience. Once they are back in the classroom, students read about In The Desert, Long Ago, and Maggie's Desert Report. Rimes in this unit: aw, ill.

Additional website resources that may be of interest include:

www.desertusa.com/life.html

mbgnet.mobot.org/sets/desert/animals

www.enchantedlearning.com/biomes/desert/desert.shtml

www.learningmagicinc.com Search for: Ecosystems, Roscoe in the Desert, Spiders – Webmasters, Insects