



OWW 2. 2 (a) Gathering information about habitats through close observation

Learning Objective: *Students will return to the outdoor classroom to practice describing the habitat of an animal that might live there.*

Mentor Texts: *"Look to the North", Jean Craighead George.*

Connection: *As a class we have been looking at all-about books and finding that authors give us a great deal of information in these books. One way authors get this information is by observing.*

Teaching: Jean Craighead George spent six months living outside watching a family of wolves to write her book. How do you think we might use our outdoor classroom to get more information about plants, trees, small animals or insects? That's right. We can be observers and record our findings.

Many of the animals you have chosen to write about cannot be found in our outdoor classroom, but we can still practice our observational skills to help us think about habitats. The outdoor classroom is one habitat.

"Try It" *Let's work in partners and choose an animal that might live in our outdoor classroom. (Suggest: squirrels, birds, insects, mice, rabbits). We can use words to gather this information and we can also use drawings to support what we are describing. Close observation means we may have to get very close to get details.*

Instructions to students for Independent Outdoor Writing:

1. Before we go outside, with your partner, write the name of the animal whose habitat you will be describing.
2. There are many different places for an animal to live even in our own schoolyard. Make sure you describe the place specifically. You may need to draw a sketch or a picture to support your words.
3. Think about how this animal stays warm in the winter, gets food, finds shelter and water?
4. Depending on the weather students may start their writing



outdoors and finish inside.

Share Out :

Have students share their observations, and guess the animal whose habitat they have described. They may then share any illustrations they have included with their descriptions.

Applying the Skill

This is one way you can find information to add details to your writing, in addition to the information you can get from books on the topic. Close observation can also be used on subjects outside the outdoor classroom. You can use close observation to gather information about the behavior of animals in your home or at the zoo or details about objects or activities such as cars or kinds of games. You can also use this observational skill when you are viewing a on-line video clip of your animal or watching a documentary.