



# ROCK EAGLE 4-H CENTER

## Dragons and Dragonflies

(Independent)

**Description:** Students will develop an understanding of the importance of communication through writing descriptions and drawing pictures of various aquatic creatures.

**Supplies:** (*Rock Eagle will supply materials for 50 students*)

- Pencils
- Crayons
- Paper for stories and descriptions of the creatures
- Paper for picture of the creatures
- Folders with the photographs of the creatures

**Time:** 1-1 ½ hours

### Instructions:

Assemble the group and read the following paragraph out loud.

"You and a friend were canoeing in Rock Eagle Lake looking for painted turtles. All of the sudden you saw a creature out of the corner of your eye and being curious you leaned to get a closer look. Unfortunately you leaned too far and you and your friend fell into the murky lake water. You made it to shore safely. By sheer luck your friend was able to take a photograph of the creature. Upon telling your teacher about what happened she/he asked you to write a detailed description of the creature and share your adventure for the school newspaper."

1. After reading the above paragraph, split your students into groups of 2-3 students. Each group will receive a folder with an animal photograph inside, sheet of paper, and writing utensil. The folder with the photo is to be kept secret from the other groups. Arrange the groups around the room so that each group has a work space.
2. Provide each group 15 minutes to write a detailed description of the creature. Teachers should remind students that neat handwriting and complete sentences are important. Student should include their name and folder letter designation on their work sheet.
3. Without advance notice to the groups, collect the pictures after only 7 minutes. Tell them the photo slowly disintegrated into mush after having gotten wet. They must finish their description from memory.



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4. After the total 15 minutes are up, collect the descriptions and reassemble the class.
5. Keeping the same groups redistribute the written descriptions amongst the class, making sure no group receives their own description. At this point students should pretend they are the artists for the newspaper and should draw the creature from the written description.
6. Using the description in front of them, each group must now try to draw a picture of the creature. Have the students transfer the letter from the description on their drawing. Work time is 15 minutes.
7. After 15 minutes have each group read their description and share their drawing. Compare the drawings with the original photograph.

## **Conclusion:**

This exercise shows how hard it is to concentrate details and communicate them to others. It is not hard to see that stories about dragons, giant flying fish, and myriads of fantastic creatures came from similar situations as this activity.

Communication breakdowns are often the cause of misunderstandings. These misunderstandings can be avoided if we develop better observation and communication skills.

## **Instructional Tips:**

1. If the students recognize the animals in the photograph, make sure they do not say the type of animal or use its name in their descriptive story.
2. Remember to have the students copy down the letter on their folder and description to correlate with the actual photograph.

## **Picture Answers:**

- |                              |                    |                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| A. Dragonfly                 | I. Dragonfly Nymph | R. Aquatic Sowbug    |
| B. Giant Water Bug           | J. Salamander      | S. Mosquito Larvae   |
| C. Damselfly Nymph           | K. Water Scorpion  | T. Hellgrammite      |
| D. Scud                      | L. Mosquito Fish   | U. Catfish           |
| E. Yellow Bellied Slider     | M. Crayfish        | V. Leech             |
| F. Water Strider             | N: Water Boatman   | W. Large Mouth Bass  |
| G. Mayfly                    | O: Stonefly        | X. Freshwater Clam   |
| H. Common Snapping<br>Turtle | P: Tadpole         | Y. Crane Fly Larvae  |
|                              | Q: Frog            | Z. Brown Water Snake |