

California Toad Narrative
An Elementary Science Lesson Plan
Designed for Group Inquiry
Based on the 5E Inquiry Model

Grade Level: This lesson is a level three inquiry and is designed for use in a first-grade science classroom. First-grade students will be analyzing a poem about a toad and then writing a brief narrative about the California Toad. This lesson is designed to promote inquiry and freedom in students' recollection of their observations.

Science Concept: This lesson requires students to use and apply their observations of Princess Mikey, the California Toad. While recalling their observations about the California Toad (Princess Mikey), students will be analyzing a poem written by Elizabeth Bishop, "Great Toad." Students will discuss the connections between Bishop's poem and their observations of Princess Mikey. Their understanding will be enforced through the composition of their own narrative.

Relationship to California Science Content Standards: (1.4.b) Students will record observations and data with pictures, numbers, or written statements.

Learning Objective: Students will write a brief narrative using five of their observations of Princess Mikey.

Lesson Implementation Plan: Students will work individually on this assignment.

Materials:

- Copies of CA Toad 2.1 (one per student) (attached)
- Copies of CA Toad 2.2 (one per student) (attached)
- A copy of the poem, "Great Toad" by Elizabeth Bishop (one copy) (attached)

Engage: Ask students: "Do you know what it is like to be a toad?" Allow students to answer, and then ask them: "Where would you live if you were a toad? What would you eat? What would you look like? And how would you travel?" After a brief discussion in which students hypothesize the answers to these questions, read students the poem, "Great Toad" by Elizabeth Bishop (attached). The poem may need to be read twice depending on student involvement and participation, and some words may need to be defined for students. After the poem is read, discuss your previously asked questions ("Where would you live if you were a toad? What would you eat? What would you look like? And how would you travel?") again. Split the whiteboard or a large piece of paper in half, and write their answers on one side.

Explore: Afterwards, ask students to recall their observations of Princess Mikey. Encourage students to discuss what Princess Mikey looks like, what she does, and how

she travels. The discussion students have about Princess Mikey should somewhat mirror their previous discussion about Bishop's "Great Toad" poem. Write the students' observations on the unused side of the whiteboard or large piece of paper.

Explain: Once all of the students' observations have been written down on the board or a large piece of paper, discuss with students the connections between Bishop's poem, "Great Toad," and the observations on the board. Ask them: "What do you notice about both sides of our list? Are there some repeated words?" Students should be able to independently guide the discussion, but some guidance may be necessary.

Elaborate: After students are comfortable with the similarities between Bishop's "Great Toad" poem and their own observations of Princess Mikey, pass out both of the previously copied worksheets (CA Toad 2.1 and 2.2). Read students the instructions for each worksheet, and explain to them that they will write a narrative about how a toad lives. Explain to students that they may choose which method they would like to write with: They could write a poem, a song, a story, or even a letter to their friend! However, their narrative must be written as though they are Princess Mikey; this may need further clarification. They must also use five observations in their narrative. A picture must be drawn to accompany their writing.

Evaluate:

- (a) Summative: Students will write a narrative about the California Toad using their observations of Princess Mikey.
- (b) Formative: Gauge student understanding based on participation in class discussions and narrative.
- (c) Formal: Collect and review the narrative and drawings of the California Toad.

Differentiation Plans:

- English Language Learners: ELL students may benefit from working with a group of students rather than individually. Position students in small groups (by moving desks near each other), and encourage conversation between students about their narratives. Additionally, students may write group narratives as opposed to individual narratives. Also, give English Language Learners the option to record their narrative instead of writing it.
- Cognitive: If students' writing levels are not advanced enough to write narratives, students may present their narratives to the class without writing them down. You may assess student understanding based on the presentation of the narrative.