

**Pond Slider – Lesson Plan  
(Level 2 Inquiry- Structured Inquiry)**

**Grade Level**

4

**Science Concept**

Observing and Inferring: The Red-eared Pond Slider

**Relationship to California Science Content Standards**

6 a. Differentiate observation from inference (interpretation) and know scientists' explanations come partly from what they observe and partly from how they interpret their observations.

**Objective**

SW correctly record 5 observations and 3 inferences.

**Evaluation**

1. Formative: Listen to students' pair shares. Have students show you their whiteboard observations and make a record of student understanding.
2. Summative: Correct completion of Drawing/ Observation/ Inference papers.

**Materials**

Paper, student whiteboards, an overhead projector, classroom whiteboard or easel (for vocabulary) and a Red-Eared Pond Slider.

**Engage:**

Ask the students what they know about observations and then ask the students what they can observe about the classroom around them. Students should pair share their observations, then the teacher can call on a few students and write some of the observations on the board. Next, the teacher will ask the students what a visiting teacher coming into the classroom would be able to guess about the students by looking at everything in the classroom. The students should pair share their ideas again, and again the teacher should record their answers. Point out that real scientists make observations all the time!

**Explain:**

Introduce the vocabulary: **Observation** (the act of perceiving something through one or more of the 5 senses: vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) and **Inference** (a guess based on facts and **observations**). Point out that the **observations** that the students made about the classroom were different from the **inferences** the visiting teacher might make if she came in and looked around. The students will then take out their individual white boards. A couple pictures of different animals will be

put up on the overhead (examples attached) and the students will practice writing or drawing one observation and one inference for each animal.

**Elaborate:**

Next, show the students how you want them to set up their page; project an example on the overhead. The title should be “Red-Eared Pond Slider,” there needs to be a place for them to draw the turtle at the top, they should write Observations about half way down, and Inferences should be written towards the bottom (handout attached). Next, teacher will model what the student’s will be expected to do by drawing a simple drawing of the red-eared pond slider and writing a few simple observations and inferences. Make sure to point out that they’ll need to have a drawing and at least 5 observations and 3 inferences to get their papers starred.

Encourage students to use post-its to write any questions they have or anything they want to learn about the Red-Eared Pond Slider. Explain that they will be observing, and inferring about, a real Red-Eared pond slider.

**Explore:**

Introduce the class to the Red-eared Pond Slider in its tank and give them time to observe and ask questions. Students should quickly pair share about what they’ve already observed about the Red-Eared Pond Slider. The teacher should call on students to list their observations and write some of the vocabulary words from their observations on the classroom whiteboard for students to refer to when they’re writing their own personal observations.

Finally, students will draw the red-eared pond slider, write their observations, and write their inferences. Remind them to write questions on their post-it notes. It might be a good idea to find a student who is labeling the parts of the turtle and point out to the class that this is a great way to record observations. Once you start labeling the parts of the turtle, what you’re making is what scientists call a diagram. Add diagram to your list of vocabulary words for this lesson.

**Evaluate:**

Have students get back into their 5 groups and take turns sharing their finished products. Each student only gets 2 minutes to share. Differentiation: Students can choose to just show their diagram or can choose to explain a couple of their observations and inferences.

Have a class discussion. What did we learn about Red-eared pond sliders? What more do we want to learn? What can observing and inferring teach us? Use the attached handout on Red-Eared Pond Sliders to answer students’ questions. Encourage them to find a book about turtles in the library or have their parents help them research turtles more at home.

**Differentiation:**

In order to scaffold, some students can work on their pages in pairs, both completing their own paper. Students can refer to the vocabulary list if they need extra support when recording their observations.