

Tail Adaptations Teaching Activity Guide

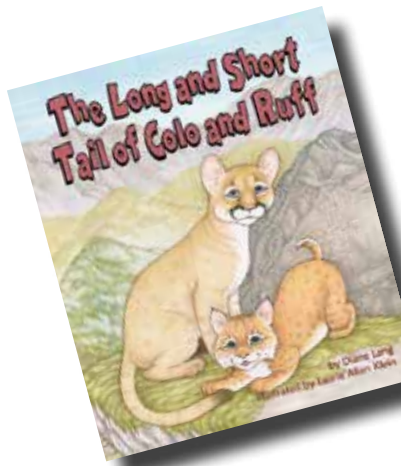


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How to Use This Activity Guide (General)

There are a wide variety of activities that teach or supplement all curricular areas. The activities are easily adapted up or down depending on the age and abilities of the children involved. And, it is easy to pick and choose what is appropriate for your setting and the time involved. Most activities can be done with an individual child or a group of children.

For teachers in the classroom: We understand that time is at a premium and that, especially in the early grades, much time is spent teaching language arts. All Arbordale titles are specifically selected and developed to get children excited about learning other subjects (science, geography, social studies, math, etc.) while reading (or being read to). These activities are designed to be as comprehensive and cross-curricular as possible. If you are teaching sentence structure in writing, why not use sentences that teach science or social studies? We also know and understand that you must account for all activities done in the classroom. While each title is aligned to all of the state standards (both the text and the For Creative Minds), it would be nearly impossible to align all of these activities to each state's standards at each grade level. However, we do include some of the general wording of the CORE language arts and math standards, as well as some of the very general science or social studies standards. You'll find them listed as "objectives" in italics. You should be able to match these objectives with your state standards fairly easily.

For homeschooling parents and teachers in private schools: Use as above. Aren't you glad you don't have to worry about state standards?

For parents/caregivers: Two of the most important gifts you can give your child are the love of reading and the desire to learn. Those passions are instilled in your child long before he or she steps into a classroom. Many adults enjoy reading historical fiction novels . . . fun to read but also to learn (or remember) about historical events. Not only does Arbordale publish stories that are fun to read and that can be used as bedtime books or quiet "lap" reading books, but each story has non-fiction facts woven through the story or has some underlying educational component to sneak in "learning." Use the "For Creative Minds" section in the book itself and these activities to expand on your child's interest or curiosity in the subject. They are designed to introduce a subject so you don't need to be an expert (but you will probably look like one to your child!). Pick and choose the activities to help make learning fun!

For librarians and bookstore employees; after-school program leaders; and zoo, aquarium, nature center, park & museum educators: Whether reading a book for story time or using the book to supplement an educational program, feel free to use the activities in your programs. We have done the "hard part" for you.

What Do Children Already Know?

Young children are naturally inquisitive and are sponges for information. The whole purpose of this activity is to help children verify the information they know (or think they know) and to get them thinking “beyond the box” about a particular subject.

Before reading the book, ask the children what they know about the subject. A list of suggested questions is below. The children should write down their “answers” (or adults for them if the children are not yet writing) on the chart found in Appendix A, index cards, or post-it notes.

Their answers should be placed on a “before reading” panel. If doing this as a group, you could use a bulletin board or even a blackboard. If doing this with individual children, you can use a plain manila folder with the front cover the “before reading” panel. Either way, you will need two more panels or sections—one called “correct answer” and the other “look for correct answer.”

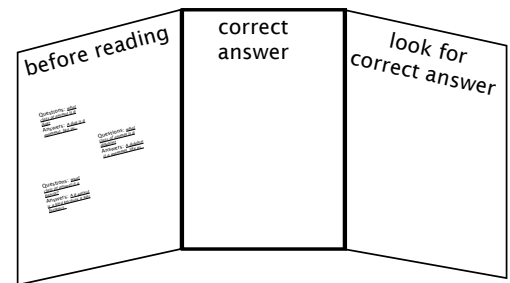
Do the children have any more questions about the subject? If so, write them down to see if they are answered in the book.

After reading the book, go back to the questions and answers and determine whether the children’s answers were correct or not.

If the answer was correct, move that card to the “correct answer” panel. If the answer was incorrect, go back to the book to find the correct information.

If the children have more questions that were not answered, they should look them up.

When an answer has been found and corrected, the card can be moved to the “correct answer” panel.



Pre-Reading Questions

1. What are some reasons animals have tails?
2. Name some animals that use tails to “talk” to each other (communicate).
3. Name some animals that use their tails for balance.
4. Name some animals that use their tails to steer.
5. Names some animals that use their tails to protect themselves.
6. Name some animals that use their tails to attract other animals (maybe a mate) to them.
7. Name some animals that use their tails to keep warm at night.
8. Can you describe how animals use their tails to do any of these things?
9. Why do you think some tails will be long but other tails short?
10. Pick one of the following animals and describe what you think its tail looks like and how it uses its tail to survive in its habitat:

Animal	Book
bald eagle	Animal Tails
beaver	Animal Tails
bobcat	Long & Short of Colo and Ruff, The
common garter snake	Animal Tails
Cottontail rabbit	Little Skink's Tail
cougar (mountain lion)	Long & Short of Colo and Ruff, The
downy woodpecker	Animal Tails
green frog tadpole	Animal Tails
gopher	Long & Short of Colo and Ruff, The
honey bee	Animal Tails
muskrat	Animal Tails
owl	Little Skink's Tail
porcupine	Animal Tails & Little Skink's Tail
red fox	Animal Tails
red-tailed hawk	Long & Short of Colo and Ruff, The
Skink	Little Skink's Tail, Long & Short of Colo & Ruff
snapping turtle	Animal Tails
Squirrel	Animal Tails & Little Skink's Tail
striped skunk	all three books
tortoise beetle	Animal Tails
Virginia opossum	Animal Tails
white-tailed deer	Animal Tails & Little Skink's Tail

Comprehension Questions & Writing Prompts

Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information

Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic.

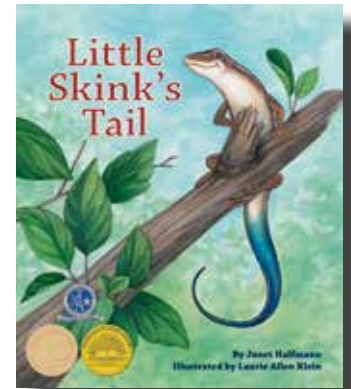
Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. (story versus For Creative Minds non-fiction component)

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

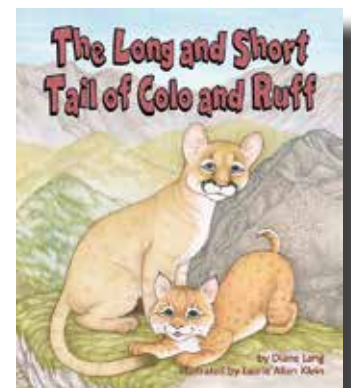
Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

1. Two of the books are fictional stories and the third book is nonfiction. Identify which are fiction and nonfiction and explain how you know.
2. Even though two of the stories are fictional, the authors provide real information about how animals use their tails. What are some ways animals use their tails to survive in their habitats?
3. How can you describe to someone what a tail is?
4. Pick one of the animals in one of the books. Describe its tail and what it uses it for.
5. Draw a picture of yourself with a tail. What type of tail would you want to have and why?
6. Are there any animals not covered in the books that you would want to learn more about their tails? How could you find that information.
7. Did you learn more, less or about as much about tails from the nonfiction book? Why?
8. In *Little Skink's Tail* and *The Long and Short Tail of Color and Ruff*, the animals imagine themselves with other tails. What are some of the animals found in both books?

1. What happened to the Little Skink's tail when the crow attacked it?
2. How did that protect him?
3. What did the crow do with the tail?
4. In the story, how did the Little Skink feel after she lost her tail? (Two emotions are expressed)
5. What did she imagine about the other animals living in the wood with her?
6. Why didn't any of the other animal tails work for her?
7. What happened to her tail at the end of the story?
8. Do you think that really happens? Why or why not?
9. After Little Skink snaps off her tail to distract the crow, she imagines having other animals' tails. Pick four different animals and imagine that you have part of their bodies. Write a description of what you would look like with your new body part and how it would help you. Draw pictures of you with your new body parts.



1. What are the two different animals in this story?
2. How are they related to each other?
3. Describe the differences in their tails.
4. How do the shapes and sizes of each tail help the animals?
5. What happened to the lizard's (skink;s!) tail when the cats paw landed on it?
6. Why did Ruff decide he didn't want a Red Hawk's tail?
7. How was the gopher's tail like Ruff's tail?
8. What did Ruff learn about his own tail by watching the gopher?
9. What did Colo's mother think he had been doing all day?



Observation Skills: Art Scavenger Hunt

Objective Core Language Arts Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

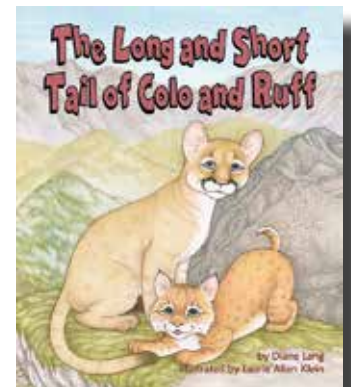
Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

Laurie Allen Klein illustrated both of these books. Can you find similarities in the art in the two books?



In this story, the skink loses its tail, but the tail grows back. There is another animal that goes through a change too. That animal is only seen in the illustrations and not mentioned in the text. Can you find the animal and describe the changes the animal goes through?

Find drawings on rocks. Why do you think the illustrator put them in the art?



Fill in the Conjunction-

Objective Core Language Arts: Use frequently occurring conjunctions.

Use one of the following words to fill in the sentence so that it makes sense.

and

but

or

so

because

Some animals use their tails for protection, _____ some animals use their tails to communicate to other animals.

Some animals use their tails to steer _____ others use their tails to stay warm at night.

Different animals can have tails that look very different _____ serve a similar purpose.

Colo the cougar had a long, thin tail _____ Ruff the bobcat had a short, stubby tail.

Little Skink snapped off her tail _____ the crow tried to grab her.

Little Skink was sad without her tail _____ she was also happy to be alive.

Little Skink saw a shadow _____ she realized her tail had grown back.

Ruff thought he might like a lizard's tail _____ the lizard snapped it off.

Ruff thought he might like a hawk's tail _____ then saw a feather fall out.

Ruff realized his short, stubby tail helped him turn around quickly _____ he saw the gopher do it.

Cross-Curricular Vocabulary Activities

Objective Core Language Arts:

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.

Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., duck is a bird & the verb to duck). Use words & phrases acquired through conversations, reading/being read to, and responding to texts.

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade-level topic or subject area.

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Use frequently occurring adjectives.

Vocabulary Game: This activity is a very general idea and is designed to get children thinking of vocabulary words that will then be used as the beginning vocabulary list for a science lesson.

Select an illustration from the book and give the children a specific length of time (five minutes?) to write down all the words they can think of about the particular subject. It is helpful to project an illustration on a whiteboard. Use eBook or book preview found at www.ArbordalePublishing.com.

The children's word list should include anything and everything that comes to mind, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the end of the time, have each child take turns reading a word from his/her list. If anyone else has the word, the reader does nothing. However, if the reader is the only one with the word, he/she should circle it. While reading the list, one person should write the word on a flashcard or large index card and post it on a bulletin board or wall.

At the end, the child with the most words circled "wins." And you have a start to your science vocabulary list. Note: if a child uses an incorrect word, this is a good time to explain the proper word or the proper usage.

Glossary/Vocabulary Words: Word cards may be used (see Appendix) or have children write on index cards, a poster board, or on a chalkboard for a "word wall." If writing on poster board or chalkboard, you might want to sort words into nouns, verbs, etc. right away to save a step later if using for Silly Sentences (on the next page). Leaving the words posted (even on a refrigerator at home) allows the children to see and think about them frequently.

Using the Words: The following activities may be done all at once or over a period of several days.

- Sort vocabulary words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. and write what they are on the backs of the cards. When the cards are turned over, all you will see is "noun," etc. (these can then be used for the "silly sentences" on the next page).
- After the cards have been sorted, go over the categories to ensure that all cards have been placed correctly. (Mistakes are a great opportunity to teach!)
- Choose two words from each category and write a sentence for each word.
- Write a story that uses at least ten vocabulary words from the word sort.
- Have children create sentences using their vocabulary words. Each sentence could be written on a separate slip of paper. Have children (individually or in small groups) sort and put sentences into informative paragraphs or a story. Edit and re-write paragraphs into one informative paper or a story.

Silly Sentence Structure Activity: This "game" develops both an understanding of sentence structure and the science subject. Use words from the "word wall" to fill in the blanks. After completing silly sentences for fun, have children try to fill in the proper words by looking for the correct information in the book.

Word Bank

Build a word bank using words found in the story or For Creative Minds.

adjective	noun	verb
blue	birds	adjust
bottom	butterfly	balance
bright	climbers	bask
bushy	crow	chase
dark	deer	dream
fluffy	feathers	drop
happy	lizard	escape
hungry	owl	fly
large	porcupine	hop
light	quills	imagine
long	rabbit	jump
narrow	red-tail hawk	leap
new	shadow	picture
pointy	skink	protect
powerful	skunk	raise
prickly	spray	run
puffy	squirrel	scamper
rear	tail	slink
sad	turtle	snap
short		squirt
stinky		steer
strong		trick
top		twitch
		warn
		wriggle

Cross-Curricular Silly Sentences-Little Skink's Tail

1. Little Skink _____ off her tail when the _____ attacked her.
verb noun
2. The crow _____ the tail so Little Skink _____.
verb verb
3. A cottontail rabbit's tail is _____ on top and _____
_____ on the bottom. It _____ its tail to _____
other rabbits of trouble.
adjective adjective verb verb
4. A squirrel uses its _____ tail to _____.
adjective verb
5. A _____ raises its tail to _____ other deer of
danger.
noun verb
6. A skunk _____ its tail and squirts a _____
spray.
verb adjective
7. A porcupine releases _____ into other animals to
protect itself.
noun
8. An owl uses its tail to _____ and _____ as it
flies.
verb verb

Cross-Curricular Silly Sentences-The Long & Short of Colo and Ruff

1. Cougars use their _____ tails for balance and steering as they _____ or _____.
adjective
2. _____ are sometimes called wildcats. They have naturally _____ tails.
noun adjective
3. Cougars have very _____ _____ legs and are strong climbers.
adjective adjective
4. Many _____ are able to drop part of their _____ when threatened. It grows back within a few months.
noun noun
5. _____ can adjust their tail _____ to the shape they need for fast flight, making turns, or landing.
noun noun
6. Birds lose _____ almost all year long, just one at a time. When a feather on one side _____ out, the same feather on the other side will soon be lost. A _____ feather gradually grows back in.
noun verb adjective
7. _____ can turn around in their narrow _____ very rapidly. They can also _____ backwards and forward in those burrows at equal speed.
noun noun verb

Cross-Curricular Silly Sentences-Animal Tails

1. Some animals have _____ and some don't.
noun
2. Before a tadpole comes out of the water to live on land, it grows _____ legs.
number
3. The deer _____ its tail like a flag as it runs away,
verb
4. Have you ever smelled a striped skunk's _____?
noun
5. Some animals, like the Virginia opossum, have a tail that can _____ onto things (prehensile).
verb
6. When they go to sleep, _____ curl up and wrap their tails around them, tucking their _____ down into their tails.
noun
noun
7. Birds even spread out and _____ their tails to attract a mate.
verb
8. A muskrat's tail is _____ and covered with scales.
adjective
9. Tails are used by many animals to _____ themselves.
verb
10. If a honey bee _____ someone, the honey bee will _____.
verb
verb

Language Arts: Sequence Sentence Strips

Cut into sentence strips, laminate if desired, and place in a "center." Have children put the events in order. Children may work alone or in small groups. Cards are in order but should be mixed up when cut apart.

Objective Core Language Arts:

Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

Little Skink was happily chasing ants for breakfast.

The crow attacked and Little Skink snapped off her bright blue tail to escape.

Little Skink was sad to have lost her tail.

Little Skink imagined having other animals' tails.

None of the other tails were right for her.

Little Skink's own tail grew back!



Animal Sorting Cards

Objective: Classify organisms according to one selected feature, such as body covering, and identify other similarities shared by organisms within each group formed.

Describe several external features and behaviors of animals that can be used to classify them (e.g., size, color, shape of body parts).

Identify observable similarities and differences (e.g., number of legs, body coverings, size) between/among different groups of animals.

Animal Card Games:

Sorting: Depending on the age of the children, have them sort cards by:

where the animals live (habitat)	tail, no tail
number of legs (if the animals have legs)	colors or skin patterns
how they move (walk, swim, jump, or fly)	animal class
type of skin covering (hair/fur, feathers, scales, moist skin)	
what they eat (plant eaters/herbivores, meat eaters/carnivores, both/omnivores)	

Memory Card Game: Print the sorting card pages and cut out the cards. Mix them up and place them face down on a table. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards so that everyone can see. If the tail matches the animal, he or she keeps the pair and takes another turn. If they do not match, the player should turn the cards back over and it is another player's turn. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

Who Am I? Copy and cut out the cards. Poke a hole through each one and tie onto a piece of yarn. Have each child put on a "card necklace" without looking at it so the card hangs down the back. The children get to ask each person one "yes/no" question to try to guess "what they are." If a child answering the question does not know the answer, he/she should say, "I don't know." This is a great group activity and a great "ice-breaker" for children who don't really know each other.

Charades: One child selects a card and must act out what the animal is so that the other children can guess. The actor may not speak but can move like the animal and imitate body parts or behaviors. For very young children, you might let them make the animal sound. The child who guesses the animal becomes the next actor.

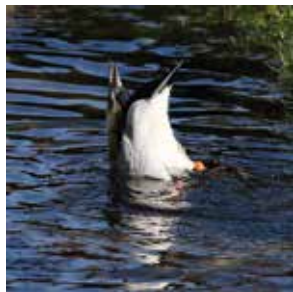














Map Activity

Objective: reading maps, geography, know that plants and animals live in different locations

Using these maps as a reference, color the areas where these animals live on the blank map on the next page.

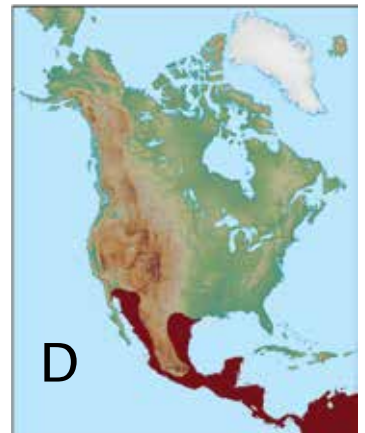
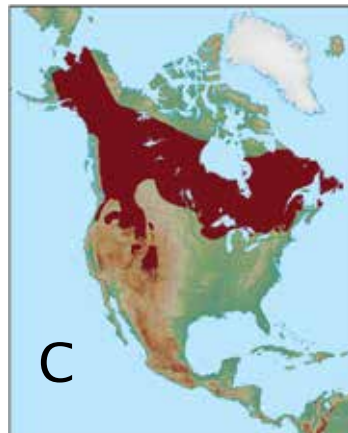
Do any animals live in the same area as you?

Which wild cat lives in most of the US?

Which wild cat lives in Mexico and Central America?

Which wild cats live in Canada?

Which wild cat lives in the western part of North America from Canada down to Central and South America?



A. Bobcats live across most of the United States, except for a portion of the Midwest near the Great Lakes. They live in many different types of habitats, like forests, swamps, deserts, and suburban areas near people.

B. Cougars are mostly found in the western part of North America, although there is one type of cougar found in Florida. Like bobcats, cougars live in many habitats, including swamps, forests, grasslands, and cities. Cougars can also be called mountain lions, pumas, panthers, or catamounts.

C. Lynxes live in boreal forests in the northern part of North America. Boreal forests are snowy forests of coniferous trees, like pine and spruce.

D. Ocelots live in warm, tropical habitats where there is dense vegetation. Tropical rainforests, grasslands, and marshes are all home to ocelots.



Silly Sentences Answers

Little Skink's Tail

Little Skink snapped off her tail when the crow attacked her.

The crow chased the tail and Little Skink escaped.

A cottontail rabbit's tail is dark on top and light on the bottom. It raises its tail to warn other rabbits of trouble.

A squirrel uses its fluffy tail to balance.

A deer raises its tail to warn other deer of danger.

A skunk raises its tail and squirts a stinky spray.

A porcupine releases quills into other animals to protect itself.

An owl uses its tail to balance and steer as it flies.

The Long and Short of Colo and Ruff

Cougars use their long tails for balance and steering as they leap or run.

Bobcats are sometimes called wildcats. They have naturally short tails.

Cougars have very powerful rear legs and are strong climbers.

In just a few steps, they saw a lizard. "Look at him," said Ruff. His tail is long and graceful! Maybe I could use that kind."

Many lizards are able to drop part of their tail when threatened. It grows back within a few months.

Birds can adjust their tail feathers to the shape they need for fast flight, making turns, or landing.

Birds lose feathers almost all year long, just one at a time. When a feather on one side drops out, the same feather on the other side will soon be lost. A new feather gradually grows back in.

Gophers can turn around in their narrow burrows very rapidly. They can also run backwards and forward in those burrows at equal speed.

Adaptations help animals succeed in their habitat. An animal's tail is a type of physical adaptation. Different animals can have tails that look very different but serve a similar purpose.

Animal Tails

Some animals have tails and some don't.

Before a tadpole comes out of the water to live on land, it grows four legs.

The deer waves its tail like a flag as it runs away,

Have you ever smelled a striped skunk's spray?

Some animals, like the Virginia opossum, have a tail that can hold onto things (prehensile).

When they go to sleep, they curl up and wrap their tails around them, tucking their noses down into their tails.

Birds even spread out and display their tails to attract a mate.

A muskrat's tail is thin and covered with scales.

Tails are used by many animals to protect themselves.

If a honey bee stings someone, the honey bee will die.

Appendix A—“What Children Know” Cards

<p>Question:</p> <p>My answer:</p> <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>	<p>Question:</p> <p>My answer:</p> <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>
<p>Question:</p> <p>My answer:</p> <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>	<p>Question:</p> <p>My answer:</p> <p>This information is correct! This information is not correct; can you find the correct information?</p>

Appendix B—Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast two animals and their tails.

