

# Animal Architects

PK/K - STEAM Lesson



## DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will think about the different places and structures where animals live. They will discuss what elements are important for animal habitats. Students will construct a place for a specific animal to live.

## Student Learning Goals

- Students will discuss how some animals are architects and build places to live.
- Students will construct a place for an animal to live while thinking about its specific needs.

## Background Information

Animals are incredible architects. An animal's dwelling or space suits their basic need to be safe and protected. Some animals also build shelters with sophisticated systems like temperature regulation, food trapping, storage, and ventilation. The spaces where animals live can also help them communicate with one another. As many animals live together, they must create a community space that works for all. Animals rely on their natural habitat to provide building materials, and some animals have adjusted to the human world and live on the top of electrical poles or in attics/basements, for example.

## Materials

### PER CLUB

- Set of animal architecture photos
- Stuffed animals
- Popsicle sticks
- Raffia
- Cardboard tubes
- Paper plates
- Cardstock
- Markers
- Scissors
- Masking tape

### PER STUDENT

- Various building materials
- Masking tape
- 1 - pair of scissors
- 1 - stuffed animal

## Teaching Tips

**SET UP:** You may want to lay out all the supplies and have students select what they want to use. Or you can create a standard set of materials for each student.

**ACCOMODATION IDEAS:** Students might want to work in pairs or as an entire class to build a place to live for an animal. This lesson could be an opportunity for students to discuss the idea that where you live can look a lot of different ways. Just as animals live in unique places so do people!

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Read "A House in the Woods" by Inga Moore
- Watch videos about animals as architects

## ENGAGE – 5 minutes

- **I wonder... Where do animals live?**
  - Show students pictures of different animals' spaces.
  - Invite students to share their ideas.
- **What do you notice about these spaces?**
  - Have students share their ideas.
    - Keep animals safe, warm, dry, protected, etc.
    - Some animals build their own places to live, using the world around them.
      - Introduce the idea of an architect - a person who designs buildings.
    - Can animals be architects?
      - Yes!

## EXPLORE – 20 minutes

- **I wonder... Could we build a place for an animal to live? Let's do it!**
  - Have students select a small stuffed animal and invite them to think about what kind of place the animal lives and what they may need to survive.
  - Pass out materials to students.
  - Invite them to start constructing.
  - Encourage students to share their designs and to talk about how it's a good place for their animal to live.
    - It keeps the animal safe, warm, dry, protected, etc.

## EXTEND – 5 minutes

- **I wonder... How did it go?**
  - Have students share their thoughts and ideas about the spaces they designed for their animals..
    - What would you change if you had a different animal?
- **What questions do we have about animal architects? How could we answer our questions?**
  - Encourage students to share their questions and a plan to investigate those questions.

## Wasp Nest



*Photo Credit: Extempo.com*



## Bird Nest



*Photo Credit: birdsandbloom.com*

**Example – Animal Architects**

**Beaver Dam**



*Photo Credit: Wyoming Game and Fish Department*



## Bear Den



*Photo Credit: North American Bear Center*

## Ant Hill



*Photo Credit: flapest.com*