Title: Create a Critter Collage

Subject: Science

Grade Level: 3rd-5th

Time: 90 minutes

Objective: Students will create a display of animals found in a specific ecosystem and be able to describe important details of that animal's habitat, features, characteristics and adaptations. The students will have to group animals according to their class and define similarities and differences between animals of the same class.

Materials:
Printed pictures of various animals. (A stack of old National Geographic magazines is ideal)
Large pieces of paper
Glue
Scissors

Method:

Begin a classroom discussion on why scientists classify animals. Point out that most newly discovered animals can be classified because of similarities between physical features. Discuss how scientists agree on classifying animals:
Kingdom (Animalia, or "animal")
Phylum (Chordata, or "has a backbone")
Class (Mammalia, or "has a backbone and nurses its young")
Order (Rodentia, or "has a backbone, nurses its young, and has long, sharp front teeth)
Family (Scuridae, or "has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, and has a bushy tail)
Genus (Tamiasciurus, or "has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, has a bushy tail, and climbs trees)
Species (hudsonicus, or "has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, has a bushy tail, and has brown fur on its back and white fur on its underparts)

Next have students look through pictures of different animals. Have them guess what class each animal belongs to. Have them compare four sets of animals from the same class. Have each student describe the similarities and differences found in each pair of animals.

Group each animal into their respective classes and create a classroom collage for each of the animal classes.

Common Core State Anchor Standards:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.