Dear Family Member,

For the next few weeks, your child will be learning all about animals at school. Your child might already know lots of things about animals—you might even have a pet dog or goldfish at home. We can't wait for your child to share the things they already know with the class. At school, we will learn the names of many animals and how animals' body parts help them survive. We will even have an Animal Hospital set up in our Dramatic Play Center! In our Small Groups, we will be practicing telling stories, rhyming, drawing and writing, and counting syllables in words.

Below are some suggestions for activities you might do at home to help your child remember what they are learning about at school:

1. Practice Drawing and Writing

   Practice writing his/her name at home by signing drawings with either his/her first initial or whole name and have him/her copy body parts, where they live, and what they like to eat.

2. Sing Nursery Rhymes

   Your child may come home singing and doing the motions for “An Old Person of Ware,” “Here is the Beehive,” and “Five Little Ducks.” The words to “Here is the Beehive” are on this back of this letter—have your child recite the rhyme and talk about the words in the song that rhyme (bees and seas, hive and live).

3. Go on a Nature Walk and Talk about Animals

   Remember what they know about the various animals in the story. Ask your child to choose stories that have animals as the characters for you to read aloud. As you read, point to and label the various animals in the story. Ask your child to choose stories that have animals as the characters. You could also write your child’s name and have him/her copy drawings with either his/her first initial or whole name.

4. Practice Drawing and Writing

   Practice writing his/her name at home by signing drawings with either his/her first initial or whole name and have him/her copy body parts, where they live, and what they like to eat.

In class, your child will be learning how to make observations about many different kinds of animals. Help your child practice observing and describing animals you might see in your daily life. Ask your child what they know about these animals. We will also be practicing telling stories. In our Dramatic Play Center, we will have an Animal Hospital set up to help them survive. We will learn the names of many animals and how they live. Your child might already know lots of things about animals—you might even have a pet dog or goldfish at home. We can’t wait for your child to share the things they already know with the class. At school, we will learn the names of many animals and how they live. Your child might already know lots of things about animals—

Dear Family Member,

[Signature]

Animals: Family Letter 1
Here is the Beehive

Here is the beehive. Where are the bees? They’re hiding away so nobody sees. Soon they’ll come creeping out of their hive, One, two, three, four, five. Buzz-z-z-z-z!
Baby Chicks

The chicks are hatching one by one in a diagonal line down, then up—what fun! Keep making lines from left to right down, up, down, up—make them all the same height.

PRE-WRITING STROKES: ZIGZAG
Planting Seeds

The farmer plants the seeds in a row in the ground where they can grow. Make a dot for each little seed. Just tap the page; that’s all you need.
Baby Chicks

The chicks are hatching one by one in a diagonal line down, then up—what fun! Keep making lines from left to right, down, up, down, up—make them all the same height.

PRE-WRITING STROKES: ZIGZAG
Planting Seeds

The farmer plants the seeds in a row in the ground where they can grow. Make a dot for each little seed. Just tap the page; that’s all you need.
Animals come in all colors, sizes and shapes. Some have big ears and brown hair, like an ape. Some have big eyes and brown hair, like an ape.

Wait just a minute. Let's play a game. Instead of how animals are different, how are animals the same?

Use your eyes to look at each animal's face—

Use two eyes to see, just like you.

Cats and puppies, gerbils too.

Our sense of sight lets us look all over the place.

Use your eyes to look at each animal's face—

How are animals the same?

Like some animals do.

But you don't have a long trunk.

Yes, you are an animal—

Is too.

Unlike some animals do.

You are an animal.

An elephant.

Yes, you are an animal—

An elephant.

Like some animals do.

But you don't have a furry body.

Yes, you are an animal—

You are an animal.

This dog is too.

But we are all animals as you shall soon see.

Animals look different from you and from me.

And some float in water when taking a nap.

Some have a tail or wings they can flap.

Some have big ears and brown hair, like an ape.

Animals come in all colors, sizes and shapes.

Dear Family Member,

Today your child listened to a read-aloud about animals.

Humans are Animals

Read the poem to your child and talk about humans and animals.
Pigs use their noses to sniff and to smell. Humans use their noses to smell as well.

Sharks have sharp teeth to chomp and to chew. Humans use teeth to eat their food, too.

Arms help koalas and humans climb trees—with strong hands and arms, they hang from branches with ease.

There are all kinds of animals that live and that grow. We are all animals; isn't that so?
The chicks are hatching one by one down, then up—what fun! Keep making lines from left to right, down, up, down, up—make them all the same height.
Planting Seeds

The farmer plants the seeds in a row in the ground where they can grow. Make a dot for each little seed. Just tap the page; that's all you need.
Describe each animal on the page by naming and talking about its body parts (see examples at left). Ask your child to point to and name the animal you are describing.

“I spy an animal with pointy ears, whiskers, a tail, four legs, and four paws. It makes the sound ‘meow.’” (Cat)

“I spy an animal with four legs and a trunk.” (Elephant)

“I spy an animal that is very small and has wings that help it fly.” (Butterfly)

“I spy an animal with legs for hopping. It makes the sound ‘ribbit.’” (Frog)

“I spy an animal with fins and a tail that it uses to swim.” (Fish)
Animal Syllables

Help students say the name of each animal and clap the syllables in the animals' names. Then ask students to color in the correct number of squares to represent the number of syllables in the animals' names.

ANSWER KEY: dog (1), tou-can (2), but-ter-fly (3), tur-tle (2)
Chicken Coops

Coops keep chickens from getting lost.

One line down and one across.

Draw the crosses on the coop—

Keep them straight; don’t let them droop.

PRE-WRITING STROKES: CROSS
Bales of Hay

For hungry horses, a delicious meal.
Draw the tops from end to end;
Make them round, make them bend.
Chicken Coops

Coops keep chickens from getting lost.

One line down and one across.

Draw the crosses on the coop—

Keep them straight.

Don’t let them droop.
Bales of hay all through the field
For hungry horses, a delicious meal.
Draw the tops from end to end
Make them round; make them bend.
Ask your child to decorate the king and queen’s crowns with zigzags on the first two rows. Then, have your child use other writing strokes to complete the crowns. Your child might use horizontal or vertical lines, dots, circles, or diagonals in addition to zigzags.
Chicken Coops

Coops keep chickens from getting lost.

One line down and one across.

Draw the crosses on the coop—
don't let them droop.

Keep them straight.
Tell Me About the Lion and the Mouse

PRE-WRITING STROKES: BRIDGE

Bales of Hay

Bales of hay all through the field
For hungry horses, a delicious meal.
Draw the tops from end to end
Make them round; make them bend.

Core Knowledge Language Arts  Animals  PRESCHOOL
The big barn doors are closed up tight.
Slide down from the left; slide down from the right.
Make an X on every door—
Cross the lines. Let’s write some more!
The big barn doors are closed up tight.

Barn Doors
Ducks are waddling up and down. Their beaks are pointed. Trace their bellies from end to end—draw a curve, then show a friend!
The big barn doors are closed up tight.
Slide down from the left; slide down from the right.
Make an X on every door—
Cross the lines; let's write some more!
The Ducks

Ducks are waddling up and down.
Their beaks are pointed.
Trace their bellies from end to end—
Draw a curve, then show a friend!
Dear Family Member,

Children love learning about and seeing pictures of animals, and we will continue learning more about animals in the coming weeks. Your child will learn about baby animals and their mothers. S/he will also learn about groups of animals, such as birds, insects, and mammals. In our small groups, we will be practicing telling stories, rhyming, drawing, and writing. Your child might come home saying the words sound.

Below are some suggestions for activities you might do at home to help your child remember what they are learning at school:

1. Read Aloud Each Day
   Remember what they are learning about at school:
   Since we will be learning all about words that start with ‘mmm’ (like monkey),
   rhyming, drawing, and writing. Your child might come home saying the words sound.

2. Sing Nursery Rhymes
   You have learned quite a few nursery rhymes.
   As you read stories about animals, talk with your child about what real animals need
   to stay alive. Talk about what certain animals like to eat and drink, and where they live.

3. Play with Stuffed Animals
   Encourage your child to play with his/her stuffed animals.
   As your child plays, talk about where those animals might live (pond, ocean, forest, desert).

4. Practice Rhyming
   The words can be real or made up, but should end with the same sound.
   For example: brush or plate and bawl.
   Encourage them to make silly rhyming pairs using everyday words.

5. Practice Writing Name
   Children love learning about and seeing pictures of animals, and we will continue
   to do problems this week.

Your child might come home saying the ‘mmm’ sound, since we will be learning all about words that start with ‘mmm’ (like monkey).

3. Play with Stuffed Animals
   Encourage your child to play with his/her stuffed animals. As your child plays, talk
   about where those animals might live (pond, ocean, forest, desert).

2. Sing Nursery Rhymes
   You have learned quite a few nursery rhymes.
   As you read stories about animals, talk with your child about what real animals need
   to stay alive. Talk about what certain animals like to eat and drink, and where they live.

1. Read Aloud Each Day
   Remember what they are learning about at school:
   Since we will be learning all about words that start with ‘mmm’ (like monkey),
   rhyming, drawing, and writing. Your child might come home saying the words sound.

Dear Family Member,

Animals: Family Letter 2
Hickety Pickety, My Black Hen

Hickety pickety, my black hen,
She lays eggs for gentlemen.
Gentlemen come every day
To see what my black hen doth lay.
Tell the Story of “The Eensy Weensy Spider”

Help students cut out the three pictures, or cut them out for them. Have students sing “The Eensy Weensy Spider.” Then, help students glue or tape the pictures in order on a sheet of paper from left to right. Use the words first, next, and last to describe the order of events in the song.
Ask your child to observe an animal that she sees every day. Your child might choose a pet or a familiar wild animal such as a squirrel, an ant, or a bird. Then ask her to pretend she is a scientist who is studying this animal. Ask each question out loud. Listen to her answer, then write it down, repeating the words aloud as you write. Now your child has made a scientist’s journal of her observations of an animal.

### Observing Animals

- **What kind of animal is this?**
- **How big is it?**
- **What color is it?**
- **What covers its body: Fur? Scales? A hard outer shell?**
- **What body parts does it have?**
- **What body parts does it use to move?**
- **What does it eat?**
- **What does it drink?**
Barn Doors

The big barn doors are closed up tight.
Slide down from the left; slide down from the right.
Make an X on every door—
Cross the lines; let's write some more!

The big barn doors are closed up tight.
The Ducks

Ducks are waddling up and down.
Their beaks are pointed,
their bodies round.
Trace their bellies from end to end—
Draw a curve, then show a friend!
Make a Rhyme

Point to each picture on the page and tell students what it is. Then, tell students to draw a line between the two things that rhyme. Remind students that rhyming words sound the same at the end. Encourage students to say the words out loud to see if they rhyme or to check their work.

Rhyming Pairs: tree/bee, ham/lamb, cat/hat, rock/sock
Help students cut out the four pictures, or cut them out for students. Review the life cycle of a butterfly, and help students glue or tape the pictures in order on a sheet of paper from left to right. Use the words egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly to describe the life cycle.
There are many different kinds of animals in our world. Even though animals look different from one another, animals that are alike belong to the same group. Here are some things in common.

- A baby bird comes out of its egg when the eggs hatch. Birds lay eggs. Birds have to take care of their eggs until they hatch. When the eggs hatch, a baby bird comes out.

- A chicken, eagle, and a goldfinch each look different. But do you know how a chicken, an eagle, and a goldfinch are alike or the same? They are all birds. There are many different kinds of birds, but all birds have wings that they can flap. Birds are covered in feathers that keep their bodies warm and dry. All birds have two legs on which they can stand. Beaks are hard and pointy. Birds use their beaks to peck, eat food, and drink water.

- Some beaks are long and big, some are shorter and smaller. Beaks are designed for specific tasks. For example, some birds have beaks suited for pecking, while others have beaks suited for tearing. Beaks are an important adaptation for survival. Birds use their beaks to eat different foods, such as seeds, bugs, and fruit.

- Birds lay eggs. Birds have to take care of their eggs until they hatch. When the eggs hatch, a baby bird comes out. Birds aren't the only group of animals that have things in common.

Dear Family Member,

Today your child listened to a read-aloud about three groups of animals: birds, insects, and fish. Read the text to your child and talk about different groups of animals. There are many different kinds of animals in our world. Even though animals look different from one another, animals that are alike belong to the same group.
How are clownfish, goldfish, and sharks all the same? They are all fish. There are many different kinds of fish, but all fish have fins and tails. They use their fins and tails to swim through the water.

All fish live and swim underwater. Some fish live in the ocean where the water is salty; it is called salt water. Some fish live in lakes, ponds, and streams where the water isn’t as salty. They live in fresh water. Fish don’t need air to breathe. Fish have gills that let them breathe underwater.

Fish and birds aren’t the only groups of animals that have things in common. How are a beetle, a butterfly, and an ant the same? They are all insects. Insects come in all colors and shapes. They have six legs. Insects can look very different from one another but they are all very small. Most insects are smaller than the tip of your finger.

There are all kinds of animals. Some animals have things in common and belong to special groups. Some animals are birds, some animals are insects, and some animals are fish.
Circle the Sound Picture: \textbf{m}

Help students identify and circle all sound pictures showing /m/. Help students remember what the sound picture /m/ looks like by drawing it on a sheet of paper or having students draw it on paper or in the air. If a picture does not show the sound picture for /m/, students should draw a line through it.
Mark These Trucks

Help your child practice the writing stroke X by drawing an X to fill each box on the trucks below. If your child is ready, have her practice drawing X’s and other writing strokes on a blank piece of paper.
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CORE KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGE ARTS

These materials are the result of the work of teachers and administrators of numerous schools over many years. Some of those schools and their students are listed below.

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