

# Aquarium Alphabet Activity

## Overview

### **Activity Synopsis**

Students will practice letter recognition while drawing South Carolina animals.

### **Time Frame**

20 minutes

### **Objectives**

The learner will be able to:

- Recognize letters.
- Repeat letter sounds.
- Discover animals and nature.
- Create drawings.

## Standards

*South Carolina Early Learning Standards*

APL-1, APL-2, APL-3, APL-4, APL-5, APL-8

ESD-1, ESD-2, ESD-6

HPD-2, HPD-4, HPD-5

LDC-1, LDC-2, LDC-3, LDC-4, LDC-5, LDC-6, LDC-7, LDC-8, LDC-9, LDC-10, LDC-11, LDC-12, LDC-13, LDC-14, LDC-15  
CD-1, CD-2, CD-3, CD-4, CD-5, CD-10, CD-11

## Background

The Aquarium is home to over 4500 animals of all different types. The exhibits show water habitats and the animals and plants that live in and around water. The main theme of the Aquarium is for guests to travel from the mountains to the sea of South Carolina. Because the focus is on South Carolina species, the animals exhibited can live in freshwater habitats like mountain streams and blackwater swamps, brackish water (mixture of fresh and salt) habitats like a saltmarsh and saltwater habitats like the ocean.

Because South Carolina is so diverse in its habitats, the animals and plants that live there are also very diverse. South Carolina is the 40<sup>th</sup> state in size (40 smallest), but 15<sup>th</sup> in biodiversity (variety of life). Animals come in many varieties and species. One way to group animals is by whether or not they have a backbone in their skeleton. Animals with a backbone are called vertebrates. Animals that lack a backbone are called invertebrates. Animals with a backbone can further be broken down into 5 groups; amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals. Invertebrates make up 98% of the animals on Earth including insects, crustaceans, snails, segmented worms and many more.

### Vertebrates

Fish – bony fish, sharks, rays

- Scales
- Fins to swim
- Cold blooded
- Gills to breath in water

Amphibians – frogs, toads, salamanders

- Thin skin

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- Lay eggs in water
- Cold blooded
- Gills as larva, lungs as adults, also breath through skin when needed

Reptiles – turtles, snakes, lizards, crocodilians

- Scaly, dry skin
- Lay eggs on land (leathery shells)
- Cold blooded
- Air breathers

Birds

- Feathers
- Wings (most can fly)
- Beaks
- Lay eggs on land (hard shells)
- Warm blooded
- Air breathers

Mammals – dogs, cats, dolphins, whales,...just to name a few

- Hair/fur
- Live babies
- Mothers produce milk for young
- Warm blooded
- Air breathers

## Invertebrates

There are over 30 groups of invertebrates including jellies, snails, insects, worms, crustaceans, sponges and many more. To learn more would mean diving into over 30 different phyla (groups).

Students can learn so much from the animals of South Carolina. During this activity, students can explore different animal species which their teacher's help while practicing letter (and sound) recognition. Use this list to discover more about the animals of South Carolina:

A	Alligator	Reptile
B	Blue crab	Invertebrate
C	Coral	Invertebrate
D	Dolphin	Mammal
E	Eel	Fish
F	Flounder	Fish
G	Gopher tortoise	Reptile
H	Horseshoe crab	Invertebrate
I	Ibis	Bird
J	Jellies	Invertebrate
K	King snake	Reptile
L	Lobster	Invertebrate
M	Manatee	Mammal

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N	Nurse shark	Fish
O	Octopus	Invertebrate
P	Pufferfish	Fish
Q	Queen angelfish	Fish
R	River otter	Mammal
S	Sea turtle	Reptile
T	Toad	Amphibian
U	Urchin	Invertebrate
V	Vulture	Bird
W	Whelk	Invertebrate
X	X-ray fish	Fish
Y	Yellow rat snake	Reptile
Z	Zooplankton	Invertebrate and Vertebrate

## Procedure

### Materials

- Computer, screen, projector (optional)
- Internet (optional)
- Paper/[Alphabet Sheets](#)
- Crayons/finger paints

### Procedure

1. Ask your students to share their favorite animal and why it's their favorite.
2. After your discussion, ask them to say/sing the alphabet out loud with you.
3. Have the students pick a letter in the alphabet. Using the animal list above, look that animal up online and find a picture to show them.
4. Have them practice saying the animals name, emphasizing the sound of the first letter.
5. Repeat this for as many letters as you would like to practice letter and sound recognition.
6. Tell each student to pick a letter. Give each student a piece of paper (or the correct letter from the Alphabet Sheets). Let them practice drawing the letter with crayons or paints.
7. Then ask them draw an animal that starts with that letter on their paper.

## Extensions

### ELA Extension

Read one or more of the following books about animals and the alphabet.

“ABC Animals Alphabet in Motion” by Sarina Simon

“Animal ABC: Playful Animals Teach A to Z: by Maria Harding

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“The Very Hungry Caterpillar’s ABC” by Eric Carle

“ABCs of Nature: A Wild and Wonderful Alphabet Experience” by Carmine Falcone

## **ELA and Math Extension**

Write each student’s name on a piece of paper. Have them say each letter and make the sound of each letter. Have them count how many letters they have in their name.

## **Math Extension**

How many letters are in the alphabet? Ask students to count with you as you sing.

## **ELA Extension**

Allow students to play with letter magnets. Practice letter recognition and sounds.

## **STEAM Extension**

Let them play with kinetic sand by making letters in the sand. If you have letter molds, let them make the letters using the molds.