

Beavers

Age/Grade Range

- Ages: 6-10

Group Size

- Up to 15 students

Time

- Set-up: 30 minutes
- Activity: 1.5 hr

Materials

- Beaver Worksheets
- Beaver fur (optional)
- Beaver skull (optional)
- Photos of beaver dams and lodges (optional)
- sticks
- brown paper bags
- cut-out sheet
- markers
- glue

Set-Up

1. Print out worksheets.
2. Set up the video on building a lodge and gather sticks for the lodge building game.

Delivery Tips

- If the weather permits, and you can take the kids to see an actual beaver dam or lodge that will make the activity more fun and active. You may even see a beaver!



NWT SCIENCE FOCUS

Topics

- Ecology and Animals

Objective

- Play games and make crafts.
- Learn all about beavers.
- Get outside and act like beavers.





Activity Directions

1. Warm-up Game: Beaver Signals
 - a. Join hands to make a circle.
 - b. The leader calls out “on the bank”, take one jump backwards. “in the pond”, they take one jump forwards. If the leader slaps their hands together, everyone must jump into the pond and crouch down as if to dive. Shout out what kind of predator the beaver saw.
2. Beaver talk: let’s learn a little about them!
 - a. If you have beaver fur and/or skull, pass them around for the youth to look at
 - b. The longest beaver dam in the world was found in Wood Buffalo National Park. It was 850m long! 9 football fields!
 - c. Why do they need dams? Make ponds to build their home.
 - d. At one time, almost extinct - 20 million live in NA now!
3. See what they already know about beavers! Ask what busy beavers do all day (build lodges, dams, eat, swim...). Ask questions about what kind of adaptations beavers have on their bodies to help them do all the things they do:
 - a. Fur: Has soft, fuzzy under-layer for warmth
 - b. Hind feet: Webbed for swimming
 - c. Front feet: Not webbed- sharp claws for digging, almost like human hands
 - d. Big flat tail: Uses it to steer in water, and slaps it on the surface to communicate
 - e. Teeth: Long orange incisors that are always growing and sharp- can cut down a tree as wide a soccer ball in about 15 minutes! Their lips close behind their teeth, so they can chew underwater.
 - f. Ears: They have excellent hearing! Valves close ears underwater
 - g. Nose: Good sense of smell too. It closes when they dive.
 - h. Eyes: Have a clear flap of skin that closes over the eyes when they dive (like goggles!)
4. Take the kids outside to see a nearby beaver dam or lodge. Or if you can’t do this you can watch a film about how beavers build a lodge: Ok, now let’s all go and be busy beavers!





6. Play busy beavers game (if possible, you can go outside to play this game)
 - a. Designate a lodge, a dam & trees. They can “build” a lodge and dam out of sticks, or you can place printed pictures of a lodge, dam, and trees to make it obvious where to go.
 - b. Put them around the room and get the kids to stand in the centre and you call while they run and do the actions:
 - i. Lunchtime- means run to the place we’ve established as the trees.
 - ii. Your dam is leaking- run to the place established as the dam (it is good to have a picture of one there)
 - iii. Go home- run to wherever you say their lodge is (could also be marked with a picture)
 - iv. Slap hands- means close hatches (touch eyes, ears, and nose) and crouch down to the floor. Explain beforehand that beavers have special flaps of skin that cover their ears and nose, and clear goggle-like eyelids to cover their eyes when they dive underwater. Have them guess how long a beaver can hold its breath- 15minutes! The slap of the hands symbolizes a beaver slapping its tail on the water, which they do to warn others of danger.
 - v. Find your family- means grab and hold on to 3 others (to make a family of 4). Explain beforehand that a beaver is one of the few animals that stick with their family for several years, and baby beavers are called kits.
7. Craft time!
 - a. Animal puppets or Colouring sheet
 - i. Have the kids make beaver puppets out of paper bags.
 - ii. Or have them do the beaver colouring sheet.
8. Get back together in a circle and talk about what we learned. *What did you learn about beavers today?*

Print Outs

- Beaver Colouring Page, Puppet Cut-out, and Photos

