Animal Textures

Time requirement

45 minutes

Group size and grade(s)

3 yr olds

5-11 students/instructor

Materials

- Hedgehog costumes
- Glue sticks
- Brown strips of paper
- Crayons
- Assorted biofacts including: Gorilla, orangutan, elephant hair, Sea sponge, coral, sea star peacock feathers, antlers, rocks, pine cones, pine branches, leaves, shells, tree bark
- Touch socks
- Story “Fluffy the Porcupine”

Goal(s)

To increase participants wonder and knowledge about animals.

Objective(s)

1. Name 1 reason why a hedgehog feels prickly.
2. Identify 4 objects based on texture.
3. Identify an object’s texture by appearance, alone.
4. Describe the difference between the textures of the live animals met in the classroom.

Theme

Animal’s come in all different textures.

Sub-themes

At a glance

Animals have a diversity of textures because of the coverings
Background

Wind, rain, sun, sand, and snow are just a few of the harsh conditions that animals must face. Often the first line of defense to such conditions can be an animal’s coverings. A polar bear’s fur, for example, can help provide much-needed warmth by trapping air underneath the fur.

In addition to protection against the elements, animal coverings can also serve other purposes including providing the proper balance of water in cells, helping an animal hide and advertising its defense. The scales of many species of desert lizards help prevent water loss through evaporation while the bright colors of an arrow frog advertise its toxicity.

From fur to scales, animals can be found in a variety of coverings. Regardless of the covering, however, each one helps that animal survive.

Vocabulary

**Bumpy** - marked by **bumps** or jolts

**Hard** - not easily yielding to pressure

**Rough** - marked by inequalities, ridges, or projections on the surface

**Prickly** – have a surface that is pointy and sharp

**Smooth** - having a continuous even surface

**Soft** – easily yielding to pressure

Texture - the visual or tactile surface characteristics and appearance of something

Activities

What’s Fluffy? (10 minutes)

You will need:

- Copy of book, “A Porcupine Named Fluffy” by Lynn Munsinger
- Batting or a stuffed animal
- Plastic Fork

Doing the activity

1. Welcome the children to “Animal Textures” and introduce the instructor. Let the children introduce themselves and their favorite stuffed animal.

2. Explain to them that a texture is how something feels. Have them feel their carpet square, pants, hair, etc. How would they describe them?

3. Ask them what part of their body they use to touch things with. Eyes? Nose? Toes? How about our hands!

4. Today, let’s discover what animals feel like. We’ll use our hands and figure out that some animals are soft to touch and others aren’t!

5. Share the story with the group. Talk about why it was funny for a porcupine to be named Fluffy. Place the batting, stuffed animal, and plastic fork in the circle and encourage the children to feel it or pass each object around the circle. What do the objects feel like? Which feels like what Fluffy the porcupine would feel like? Which feels soft like the clouds or marshmallows that Fluffy used to
make him soft? Can the kids think of other things that are prickly or soft?

Wrap-up

Not everything feels the same!

What Does it Feel Like? (15 min)

You will need:

- Touch Socks with different biofacts (bivalve/mussel, feather, snake skin, rock) hidden in them
- Additional biofacts that may include: sea turtle shell, peacock feathers, antlers, rocks, pine cones, pine branches, leaves, ostrich egg shells, tree bark

Doing the activity:

1. Show the class one sock and explain that you hid something in each sock. Their job is to use their sense of touch to describe how it feels and maybe even guess what is in the sock. Reassure them that there is nothing alive in the sock or anything that could poke or hurt them to touch. They may be apprehensive about reaching in the bag without looking. If so, they can choose to feel the object through the sock instead of putting their hand in it.

2. Pass the socks around the circle. Encourage the adults to pass the sock – if left to the 3 year olds, the sock will never get passed on!

3. After each child has chance to touch, take item out and review the way it felt. Some items may include:

   - **Turtle shell** | **Smooth**
   - **Pine cone** | **Bumpy, rough**
   - ** Feather** | **Soft**
   - **Stone** | **Hard, rough**
   - **Shell** | ** Smooth, hard**
   - **Acorn or buckeye** | **smooth, hard**
   - **Snake Skin** | **slippery, papery, scaly**

4. Place the additional biofacts in center of circle.

5. Name an adjective and then, as a group, see if the kids can find something in the circle that matches the description. Pass it around the circle, if possible. If not, encourage the kids to come to the center of the circle to touch the object. Also encourage the children to get up and find something in the room that feels the same.

Wrap-up

Our sense of touch helps tell us what is around us!

Animal Demos - (15 minutes)

You will need:

- Hand soap
- Review rules with the class
- Animals will include two of the following: guinea pig and hedgehog or tenrec

Doing the activity
Short Tailed Opposum

- Mammal – covered in fur.
- Ears are not furred as heavily (can release excess heat from body as blood circulates through their ears)
- Fur can also be used by animals to prevent bites and scratches.
- Many mammals spend time grooming fur to keep it soft. How do animals groom? They often use their teeth and tongue and even sometimes use the help of other mammals.

East African hedgehog

- Mammal (like short tailed opposum) although looks and feels very different
- Found in the deserts of Africa
- Foods are earthworms, slugs, insects, and snails.
- Spines: Spines are modified hairs. Newborn are blind and almost naked with a few soft, white spines which are shed after about 1 month. Within 2-3 days after birth, dark spines begin to grow which become stiffer, sharper, and longer as they age. Used for protecting self. Can curl into a ball to protect soft belly and face where no spines are found. Avg. number for adult is 5,000 spines each about 1 inch long.
- Birds of prey and other carnivores will prey on hedgehogs.

Getting ready

You will need:

- Long construction paper pre-cut and glued onto clothespin.
- brown strips of paper
- glue sticks
- crayons

Doing the activity

1. Pass out an outfit to each child.
2. Encourage the kids to decorate their hedgehog costume by gluing on just the tips of the brown strips of paper and folding them up so that they will stick up when kids curl up in a ball with their outfit on. They can also color it.

Assessment

Extension

Explore the Zoo and for each animal, guess what it might feel like.

Find objects in your house that feel soft, hard, bumpy, etc. Next, go outside and find objects that feel the same.

Wrap-up

Thanks kids for listening and being good visitors with the animals.

Resources

Hedgehog Costumes (5 minutes)