



## Characteristics of Animals in *Charlotte's Web*

### Introduction

#### Objective:

Animals come alive in productions and stories. Students discover that characteristics of animals can help to determine if the animal is real or not real. Students draw one of the animals from the production and tell what makes it real and what makes it not real.

#### Academic Content Standards:

##### ✦ National Standards:

###### □ Science as Inquiry

Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry  
Use data to construct a reasonable explanation  
Communicate investigations and explanations

###### □ Life Science

Characteristics of organisms

##### ✦ Ohio Standards

###### □ Life Sciences

Students demonstrate an understanding of how living systems function and how they interact with the physical environment. This includes an understanding of the cycling of matter and flow of energy in living systems. An understanding of the characteristics, structure and function of cells, organisms and living systems will be developed. Students will also develop a deeper understanding of the principles of heredity, biological evolution, and the diversity and interdependence of life. Students demonstrate an understanding of different historical perspectives, scientific approaches and emerging scientific issues associated with the life sciences.

**Benchmark A** Discover that there are living things, non-living things and pretend things, and describe the basic needs of living things (organisms).

*Grade K Indicator 2* Discover that stories (e.g., cartoons, movies, comics) sometimes give plants and animals characteristics they really do not have (e.g., talking flowers).

**Benchmark B** Recognize the importance of respect for all living things.

*Grade 1 Indicator 3* Describe how plants and animals usually resemble their parents.

###### □ Scientific Inquiry

**Benchmark A** Ask a testable question.

*Grade K Indicator 1* Ask "what if" questions.

*Grade 1 Indicator 1* Ask "what happens when" questions.

**Benchmark B** Design and conduct a simple investigation to explore a question.

*Grade 1 Indicator 5* Create individual conclusions about group findings.

**Benchmark C** Gather and communicate information from careful observations and simple investigation through a variety of methods.

*Grade K Indicator 5* Draw pictures that correctly portray features of the item being described.

*Grade 1 Indicators 8* Use oral, written and pictorial representation to communicate work.

□ **Scientific Ways of Knowing**

**Benchmark A** Recognize that there are different ways to carry out scientific investigations. Realize that investigations can be repeated under the same conditions with similar results and may have different explanations.

*Grade K Indicator 1* Recognize that scientific investigations involve asking open-ended questions. (How? What if?)

*Indicator 2.* Recognize that people are more likely to accept your ideas if you can give good reasons for them.

*Grade 1 Indicator 2* Demonstrate good explanations based on evidence from investigations and observations.

## Getting Started

### Materials:

- Chart
- Markers, crayons, etc.
- Stuffed toys or beanie babies to represent each animal in the production
- Student activity handout

### Vocabulary:

- Characteristic
- Real
- Not real

### Technology:

- Record information on the computer and display on the monitor
- Use “Kidspiration” program to generate a chart or web of the information the students share

## Lesson

### Orientation Activity:

Show the class beanie babies or other stuffed toys that represent the animals in the production (pig, sheep, rat, spider, goose/gander). Ask the students to name parts of the animals that you point to (ears, eyes, tail, legs, etc.). Ask the students what each animal needs in order to live. Record water, food, shelter, etc. on the board or chart as they share them. Ask students how they are alike or different than these animals. Ask what would happen if the animals were able to do some of the things that they (the students) were able to do?

### Learning Activity:

1. Put up the chart on the board (see example) of the characteristics of the animals in the production. Place the picture and name of each character on the chart one at a time. Ask the children to name characteristics of the animals. Ask what if the animals were like the ones in the production? What characteristics would they have then? Record all of the characteristics on the chart.

2. After all of the animals have been recorded, ask the students which of the characteristics are of a real animal and which are not. After the ones that are not real, follow up with “What happened that shows you they are not real?” Record all ideas on the chart. Talk about ways that the production/story gives not real characteristics to characters and why.
3. After all of the animals have been discussed, ask each student to choose one of the animals and draw a picture of it. They should write or dictate to you to complete the following statements. The “pig” is real because \_\_\_\_\_. The “pig” is not real because \_\_\_\_\_. Leave the blank open for the students to fill in.

## **Evaluation and Follow-Up**

### **Assessment Tools and Methods:**

Check student ability to explain thinking during discussion and sharing of animal characteristics. Look for misconceptions as to what is real and not real.

Check illustration and statements for individual ability to share thinking.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

Math: Count the number of animal pictures that represent characters in the production.

Art: Look for small motor control in writing and drawing

Language Arts: Look for ability to make a complete statement and fill in the blanks in a statement.



Name	Picture	Live animal characteristics	Animals in the production characteristics	Explain
Charlotte the spider				
Wilbur the pig				
Templeton the rat				
Sheep				
Goose/Gander				

**Characteristics of Animals  
Chart**



# Student Activity Handout

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ is real  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is not real  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.