

Growing readers!

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Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 13

Share What You Discover! Publishing Your Work

Almost every week there is a news story about a new finding or discovery in science. These news stories are one of the exciting steps in the science world: sharing what you find! Helping kids share their own scientific findings will really help them feel like part of the scientific community.

When scientists publish their work, they often have to summarize what they've done for readers and listeners who don't know much about the topic area. Because of that, scientists and researchers have to be able to say what they know in a way that everyone can understand. Summarizing what they've learned and explaining it in a simple way are two great activities for young science minds.

Summarizing

A good way to work on summarizing is to start with the **big picture**. "What was the purpose of our experiment?" "To see how much rain fell during the month of April." Once the purpose is clear, ask your child to **supply some facts**. "We made a rain gauge with a plastic cup and a magic marker. We put it in our deck. Every day we checked on it, and poured out any water that was in it. Every day I wrote down how much water was in the cup. Then, I colored in how much rain we got on our bar graph."

Using descriptive words and definitions

Using any field notes or journal entries, help your child describe the **equipment** he used, and any **vocabulary** you talked about throughout the experiment. In the rain gauge example, a gauge and a ruler were used to collect and measure the water. A stretch of long, dry days led to a discussion of the words drought, and a stretch of rainy days led to conversations that included drizzling and pouring. Help your child pair new vocabulary words with simple definitions. "A gauge measures the amount of something, like how much water we collected."

Sharing what you learned

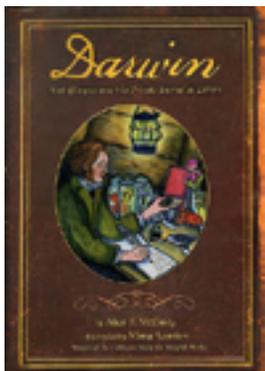
Once all the information is collected, have your child use a combination of drawing, dictation, and writing to summarize, make simple, and share what he's learned. Encourage your child to introduce the topic, use facts, and to provide a concluding statement. Some creative ideas for sharing include creating a newspaper article announcing results. "Wettest April in History!" Complete the article with a short paragraph and the bar graph created throughout the month. Another suggestion for sharing findings is to use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish the writing. Photo sharing services or blogging services allow one to easily share published work.

Sharing results from simple experiments brings the scientific process full circle. It provides children with an opportunity to reflect on what they've done, and to share that work with others.

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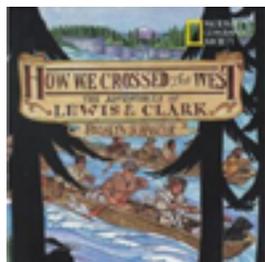
Recommended children's books



Darwin

By Alice McGinty

This picture-book biography begins with Darwin's childhood interest in collecting specimens and experimenting with chemistry. The story then focuses on his five-year voyage aboard the Beagle, when he observed geology, animals, and plants; collected specimens; and took lots of notes. He returned to England and spent his life researching, reflecting, and writing about his discoveries. (Age level: 6-9)



How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis And Clark

By Rosalyn Schanzer

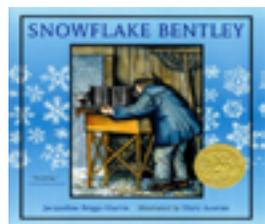
This simplified version of the diaries of Lewis and Clark begins with the letter from Lewis to Clark proposing a "trip to explore those western rivers which may run all the way across North America to the western ocean." Every stage of the journey is shown in detailed illustrations accompanied by excerpts from the lengthy diaries that the explorers kept. (Age level: 8-12)



The Magic School Bus Inside a Beehive

By Joanna Cole

Ms. Frizzle, the amazing teacher whose students experience field trips in extraordinary fashion introduces her class to the world of insects via an excursion through a honeybee hive. The students have a chance to observe typical honeybee behavior and participate in bee activities! After the trip, the students write school reports that provide additional information on the topic. (Age level: 6-9)



Snowflake Bentley

By Jacqueline Briggs Martin

In this picture book biography, meet Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley, the Vermont farm boy born in 1865, who devoted his life to figuring out how to take beautiful photographs of snowflake crystals. His "microphotography" technique proved that no two snowflakes are alike! Many of his images are still used in nature photography today. (Age level: 6-9)



Weather Words and What They Mean

By Gail Gibbons

Award-winning nonfiction writer Gibbons clearly explains and illustrates four big weather concepts: temperature, air pressure, moisture, and wind. Kids will connect what they see outdoors with the information in this engaging book, and learn how to identify clouds or the types of wind and rain storms. The book ends with a page about curious weather facts. (Age level: 6-9)