

NATURE



1. Make a seasonal place mat to celebrate spring, summer, or fall. Outdoors, collect some flowers or leaves. Place them between the pages of an old telephone book until they are flat and dry. Glue your dried plants to a piece of construction paper. Cut out a sheet of clear, transparent contact paper that is the same size as the construction paper. Remove the paper backing from the contact paper and place it, sticky side down, over your paper place mat. Your placemat will be stronger and longer lasting if you put clear contact paper on the back, too.

2. Turn old dominoes, blocks, or checkers into an animal poetry game. Write words, including nouns for the names of wild animals (*deer, fox, turkey*) and verbs (*run, hop, swim*), on small pieces of paper. Also write adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and other parts of speech. Tape or glue the words onto the blocks or game pieces. Put the blocks in a bag or box. Draw several without looking. Use the words you draw to inspire a poem about an animal. If you draw an odd combination such as *turkey* and *swim*, you might come up with a surprisingly creative poem!

3. Build a bird feeder from a clean, dry, 1-quart milk carton. About halfway down one side of the carton, cut a hole in the shape of a small arched door. Make the hole big enough for birds to put their heads in, but not so large that the carton gets wobbly. Poke a pencil or wooden dowel through the carton just below the door. The pencil will serve as a perch. Fill the carton with birdseed to a level just below the base of the door. Hang and enjoy watching the birds that visit your feeder.

4. Write a poem about sharks using *iambic pentameter* in some of the lines. This is a classic, rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables alternating in five pairs, like this: ho-HUM, ho-HUM, ho-HUM, ho-HUM, ho-HUM. (To get an idea of its rhythm, sing, “Heigh-**ho**, Heigh-**ho**, it’s **off** to **work** we **go**!”) Make sure that your poem uses words, images, and pacing to convince readers that sharks are wonderful animals.

5. A *cinquain* is a five-line poem. **Write a cinquain about an animal that beats the heat**, following these rules:

Line 1: One word (a noun) names the subject of the verse. (Your first line will be the name of the animal.)

Line 2: Two words (adjectives) describe the subject.

Line 3: Three words (verbs) describe the subject’s actions.

Line 4: Four words give the writer’s opinion of the subject.

Line 5: One word (a noun) offers another name for the subject.



6. Demonstrate why it’s smart for an animal to cool off in the shade.

Put a thermometer on the ground in a sunny spot. Put another on the same kind of surface (grass, pavement, gravel) nearby but in the shade. Wait a few minutes and read the temperatures. What conclusions can you draw? Try testing different kinds of surfaces. Try to decide if an animal will cool off better on grass or on a rock.