

Oxley Nature Center Outreach Programs, listed alphabetically

19th Century Fun 45 minutes 1st – 5th
During the 1800s children in Oklahoma had lives that were similar to those of children today; they had families and friends, things to learn, chores to do, and the big job of growing up to be part of a community. However, their fun time did not include plastic toys, television, or video games. What kind of toys and games did they have? Tops, jacks, hand-carved wooden toys, marbles, Hully-Gully (a counting game), Rock-Rock (a 500-year-old German guessing game), as well as some native American games like the Stick Game and Buffalo Robe are some of the possibilities. A handout will be left that may be duplicated, inviting students to interview older family members and neighbors. Some of those old-timey activities may still linger on today, either in memory or even as active skills.

Adaptations 45 minutes 1st – 5th
An adaptation helps plants and animals cope with the environment in a specialized way. It can be either a behavior (like migration or hibernation when winter's cold weather makes food scarce) or a physical part (like hooks that allow a plant's seeds to disperse by grabbing on to a passing animal). Today we'll focus on physical adaptations of plants and animals. First we'll try out some simple tasks with one of our human adaptations "blindfolded" (our opposable thumbs will be taped to our forefingers to remind us not to use them.) Then a kit full of plant and animal pieces (wings, skulls, seed pods, etc.) will help us explore the diverse ways our fellow living things are adapted to survive in the world.

Animal Homes 20 to 45 minutes PreK - K
Our homes serve several purposes: they provide us shelter from the elements, and a place to keep things. We make our homes out of a variety of materials. In some ways, animal homes are similar, in other ways they may be very different. First we will discuss our own homes and how we use them. Then we will use a kit of animal homes that are no longer in use (wasp nests, cocoons, insect galls, clam and turtle shells, holes drilled into trees, bird nests, etc.) to compare how animal homes are like ours and how they are different.

Feathered Friends 20 to 45 minutes PreK – 12th
Birds are an important part of a healthy ecosystem, they also serve as early warning systems of environmental problems. They have also inspired humans throughout history in art and engineering. We begin by asking students to tell us EVERYTHING they know about birds, and we write it up or depict it on the white board. After assembling and briefly discussing an impressive amount of shared information, we erase any item that can also be applied to an animal that is not a bird. For instance, "lays eggs" could also be said of turtles or butterflies, which we will agree are not birds. When we finish, what is left are "hollow bones" and "feathers", which is currently the definition of a bird. We use items from a kit to share ideas like how owls fly silently, and why different birds have shapes to their wings, feet, and beaks.

Weather happens every day. We discuss scientific weather vocabulary like sunny, cloudy, clear, rainy, dry, stormy, windy, calm, and unsettled. We use different kinds of weather instruments to measure air temperature, wind direction and wind speed, and we talk about barometric pressure. After collecting the current readings, we can use the data to make a short-term forecast.