

Explore & Learn

Lessons and Activities

PK, TK, and VPK Instruction

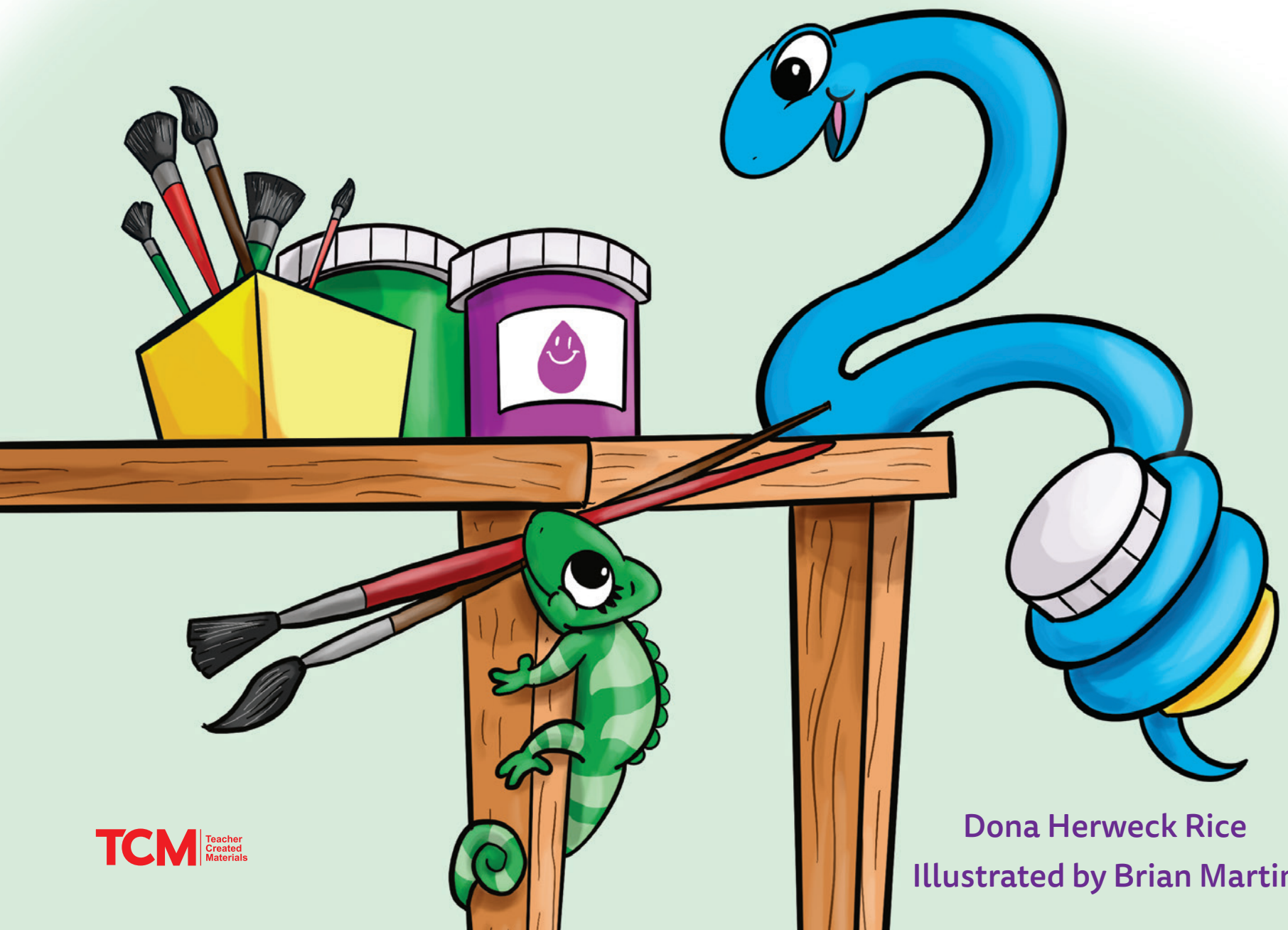
What Lives On Earth?

Table of Contents

- Thematic Read-Aloud Book (12 pages)
- Sample Lesson Plan and Materials (12 pages)
- Sample Student Materials (4 pages)
- Sample Observation and Assessment Materials (3 pages)



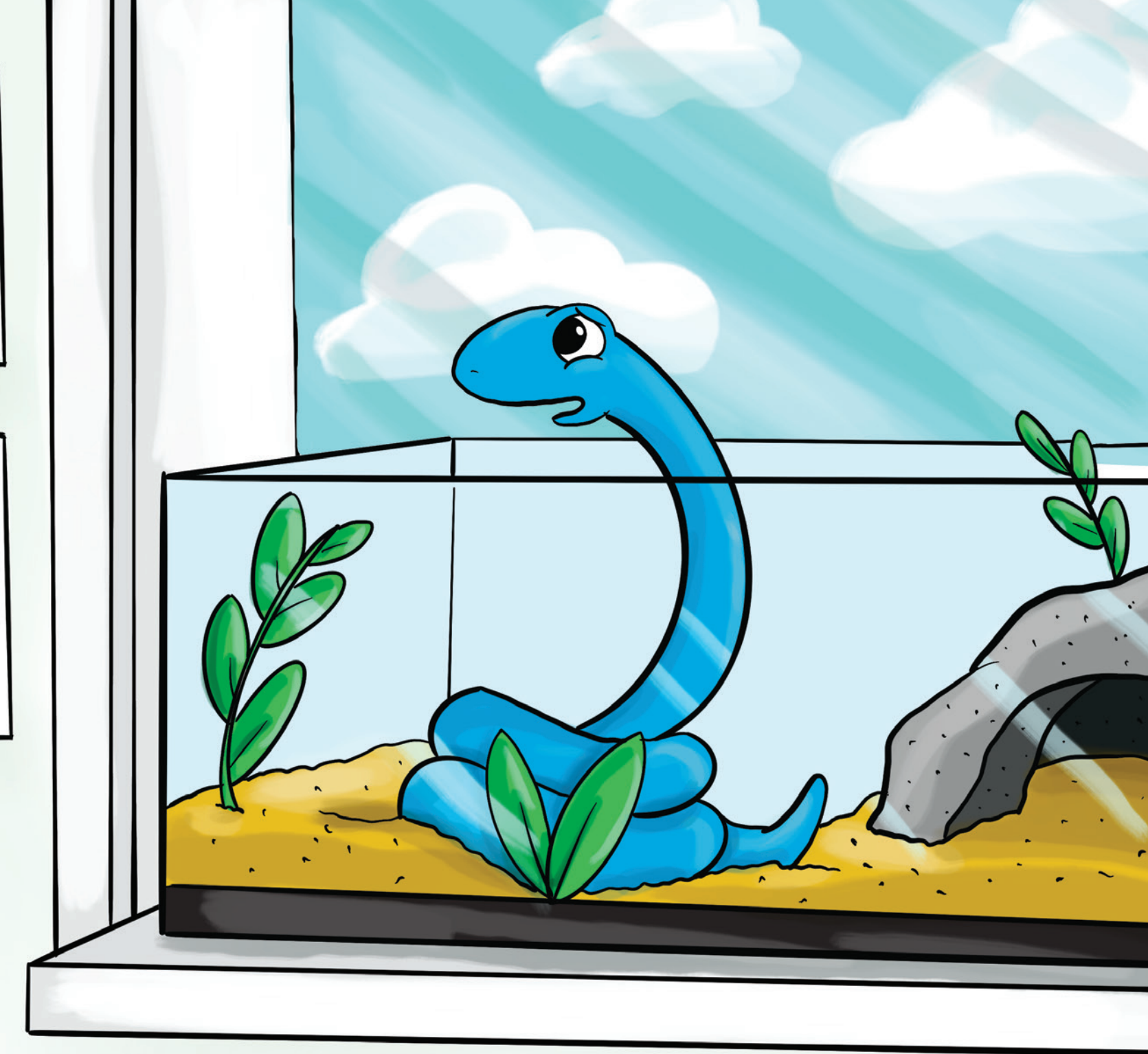
Cam and Sam's Colorful Adventure



"Can you see our friends?" Cam asked from her plant between the teacher's desk and art table.

"Yes, they are all on the playground. It looks like they're having a great time," Sam sighed from his tank by the window.

"I wish we were having a great time with them," Cam answered, turning a sad shade of blue.



Sam slowly hissed, "Yessss," and lowered his chin to rest sadly on his own blue coils.

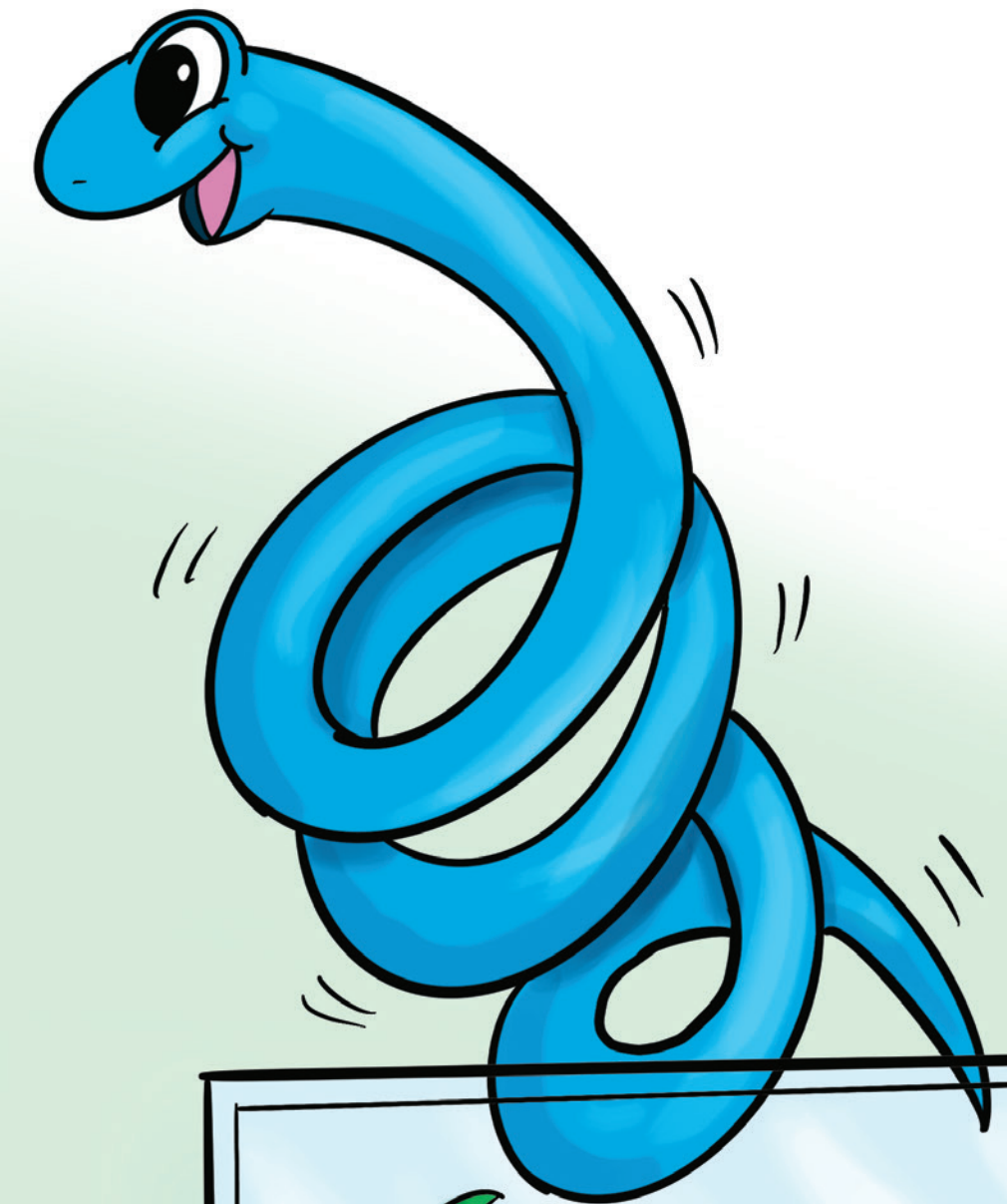
"Hey, I have an idea!" Cam perked up, turning a happy rosy pink. "I think we can have a great time."

"I'm lissstening," Sam replied, spinning around to look at his friend. "What do you have in mind?"

Cam pointed to the students' artwork, proudly hung across the classroom. "Remember how much fun the kids had yesterday when they painted? I think we can do it, too. Let's give it a try! How hard can it be?"



"Yes! Yes! Yesss!" Sam replied, springing up from his coils. "Painting looks like so much fun!"



Sam slithered out of his tank and joined Cam at the art table. All the paint colors were there: red, blue, yellow, orange, and the rest. There was even a sparkly purple.

Cam pushed the roll of paper to the floor where they could reach it better. She then crawled down, holding two paintbrushes in her mouth. Sam gripped some of the paint jars in his coils and lowered them to the ground.



"Okay, let's open the paint and get started!" Cam cried, a little squeak of delight in her voice. Gripping the red jar with her strong feet, Cam pushed and twisted to remove the lid. "Ugh," she grunted. "This is tougher than I thought. Can you give it a try, Sam?" Cam asked, holding out the jar.



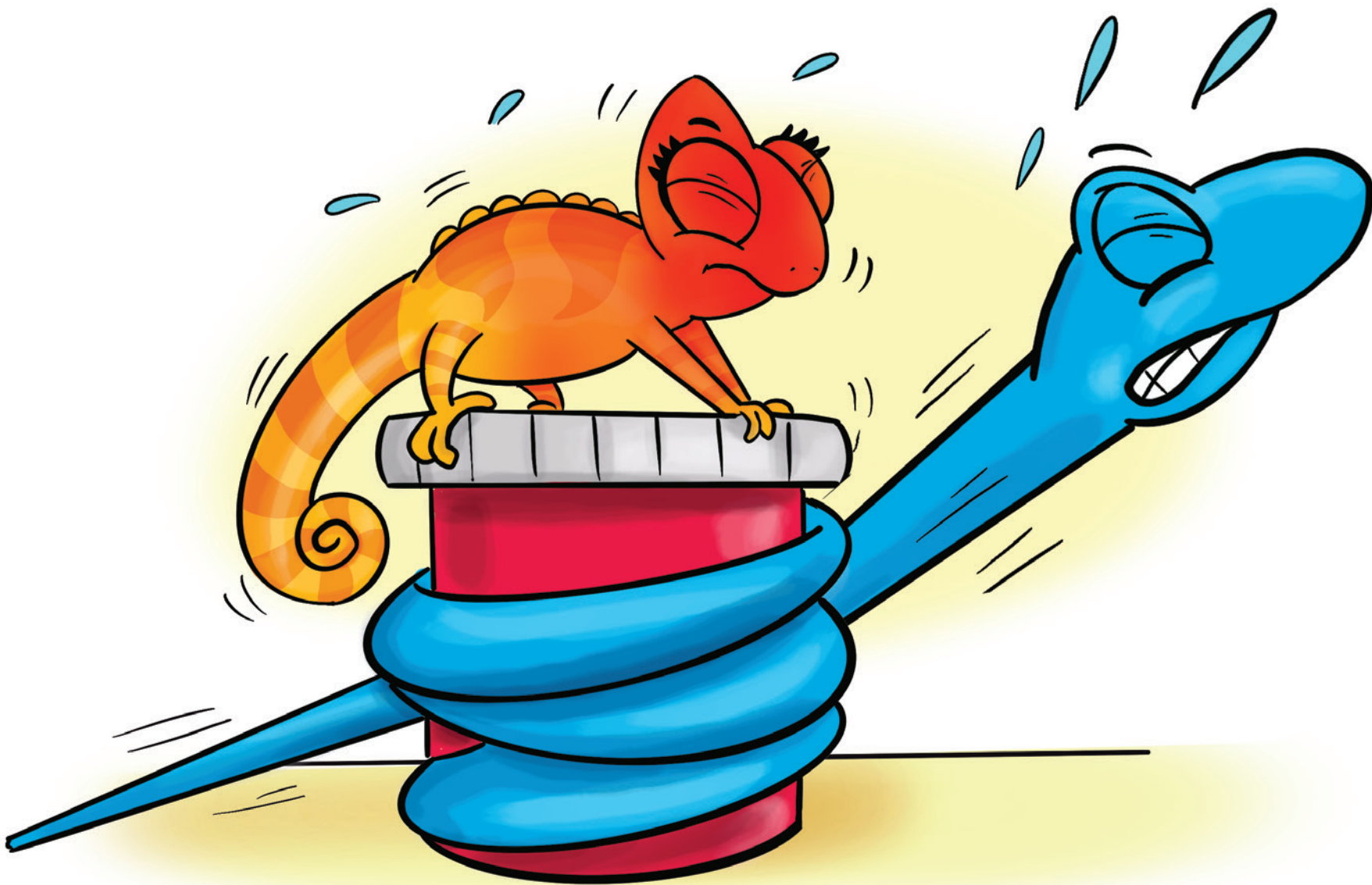
"Yesss, I'll try," Sam answered, gripping the jar in his strong coils.

Sam pushed and pulled. He twisted and turned. But try as he might, he could not open that jar. The lid would not budge!

"I'm sorry—I can't do it," Sam sighed. He set down the unopened jar and just looked at it.

"Oh, dear," Cam sniffed.





"There must be something we can try!" Cam whined. She then remembered that whining never helps. So, she sniffed again, sighed, and tried to think. "How about we do it together?" she asked.

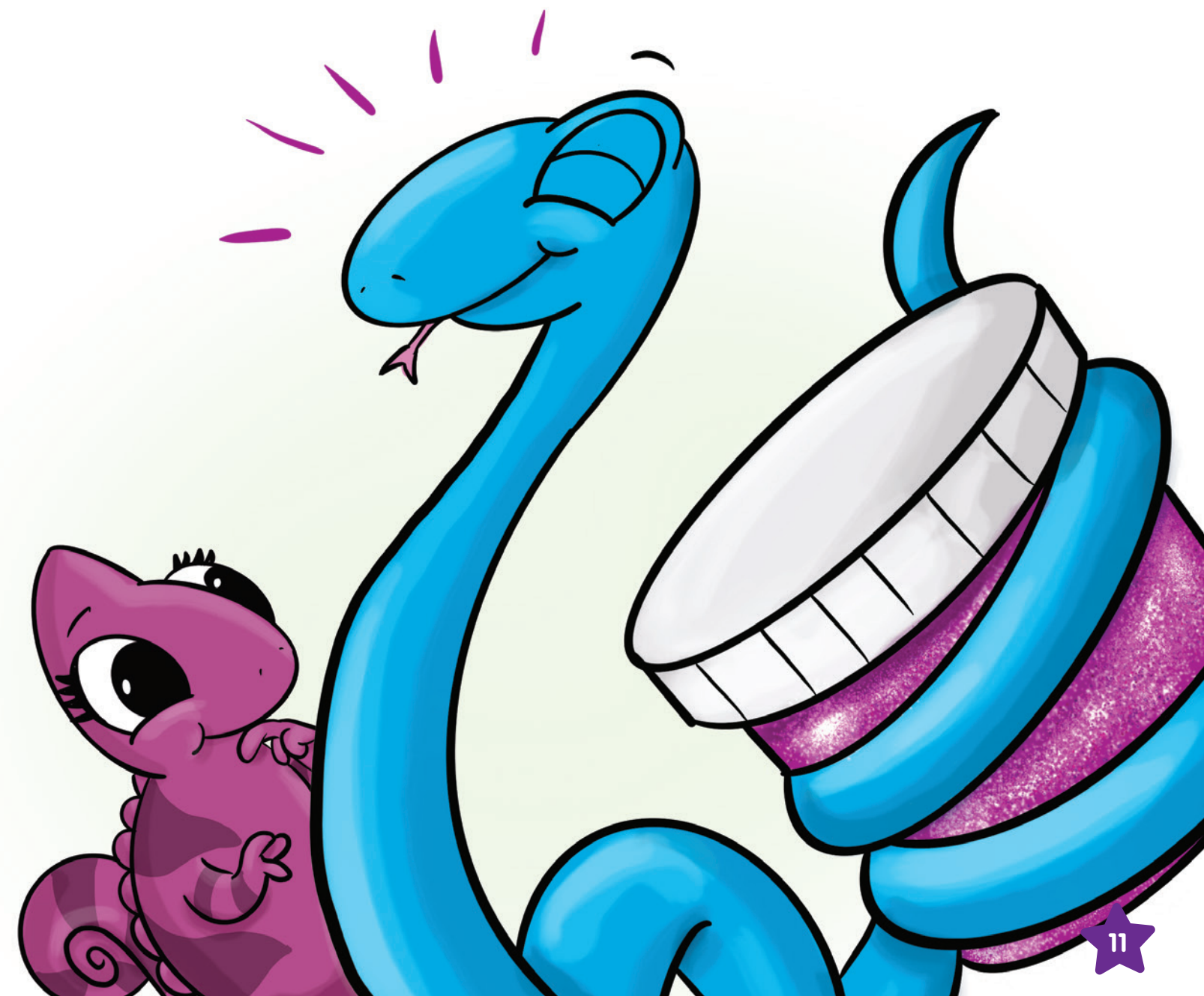
"It's worth a try," Sam answered. Then, he gripped with his coils, and Cam gripped with her feet. They pushed and pulled. They twisted and turned.

But it still didn't work!

"Oh, dear," Cam sniffed again.

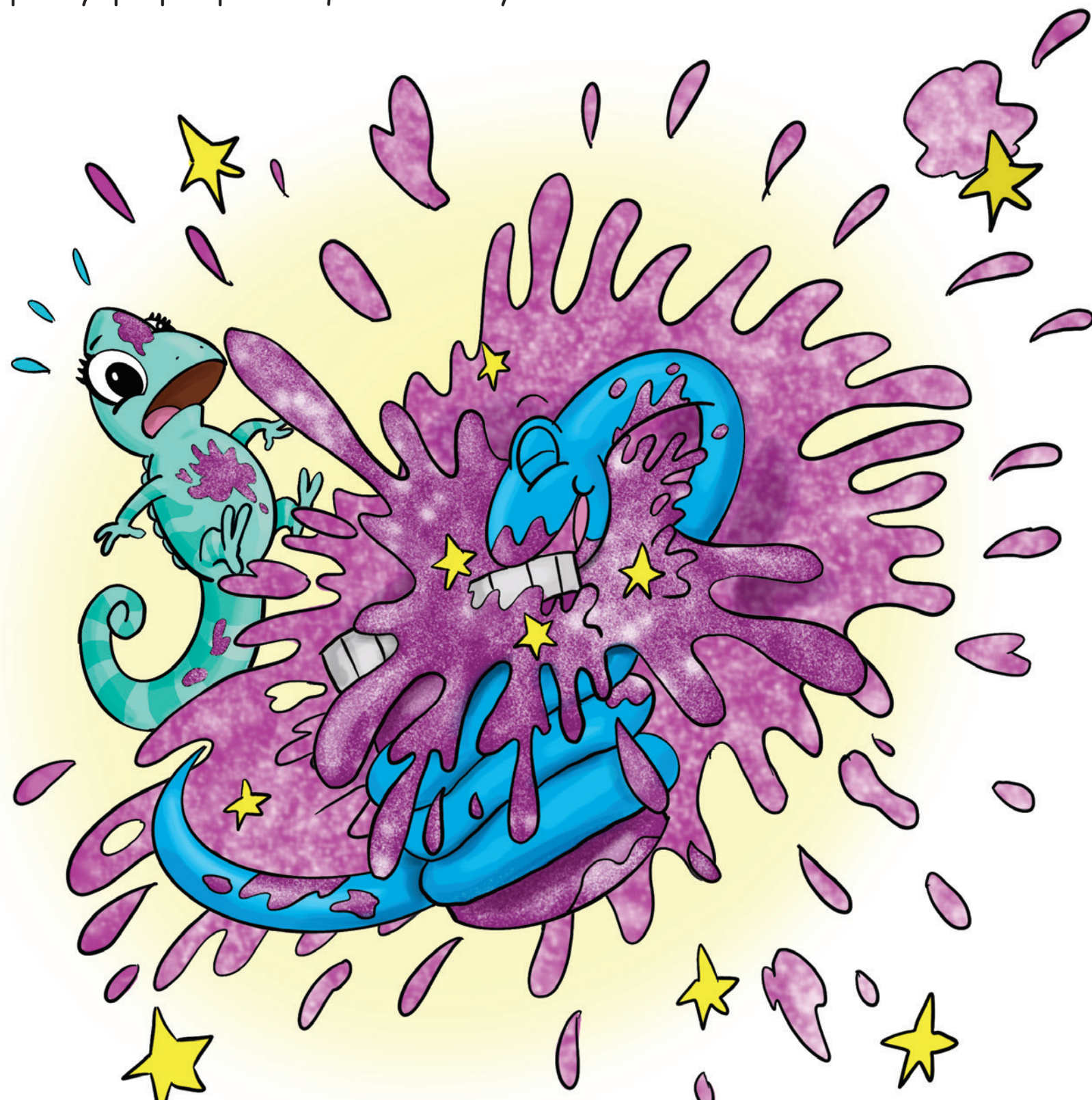
Then, Sam hissed. "Ssss!" he said, a lightbulb going off in his brain. "I think I have something else to try."

Sam picked up the jar of purple sparkly paint and gave Cam a wink.



Opening his jaw as wide as possible, Sam bit down on the jar.

The good news is that Sam's plan worked. The bad news is—woosh! Sparkly purple paint squirted everywhere.

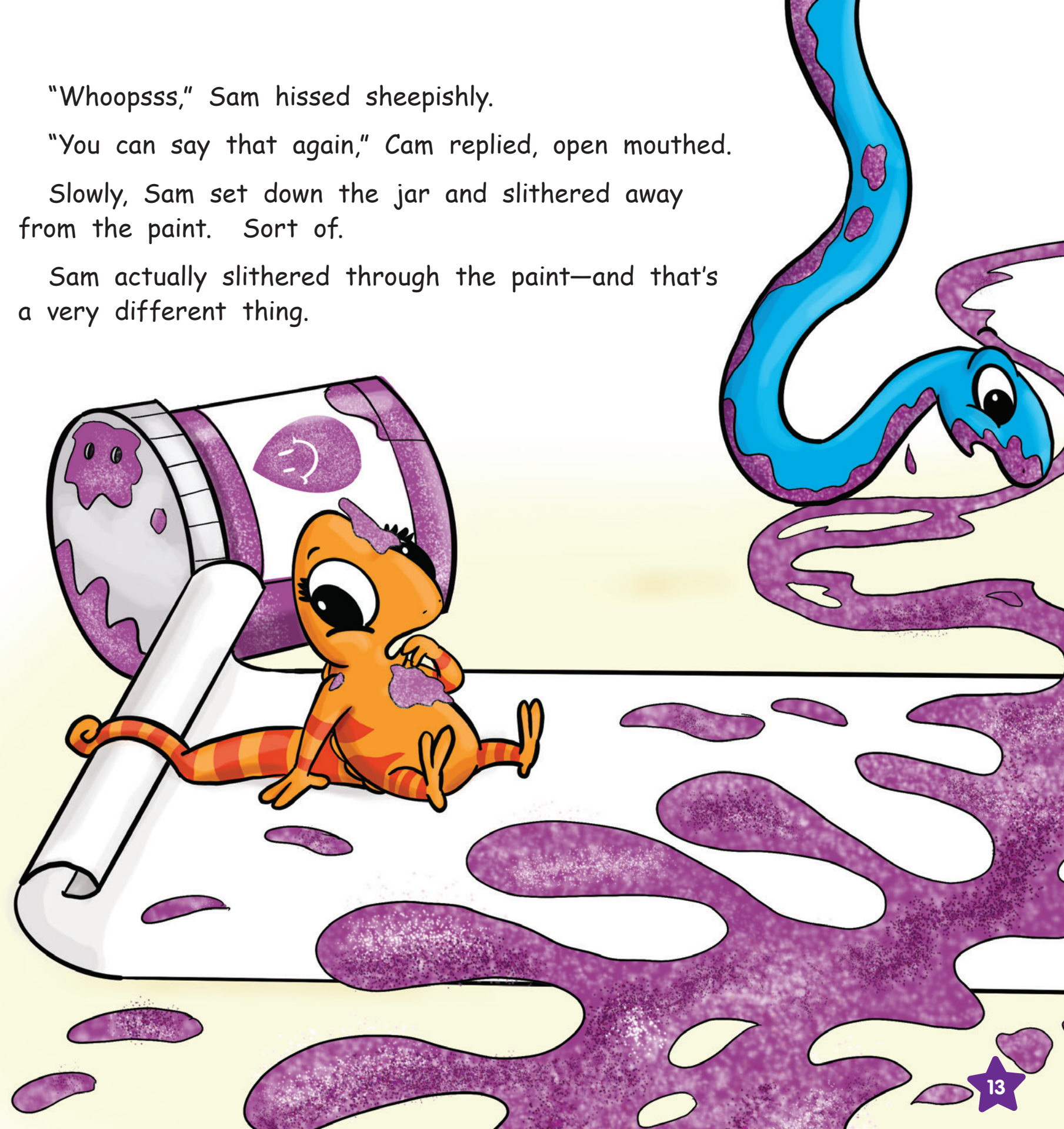


"Whoopsss," Sam hissed sheepishly.

"You can say that again," Cam replied, open mouthed.

Slowly, Sam set down the jar and slithered away from the paint. Sort of.

Sam actually slithered through the paint—and that's a very different thing.



"Umm...I'll get some towels to clean this up," Cam said, staring at the mess they'd made.

"Thanks," Sam replied, his head hanging low.



Cam saw a roll of paper towels by the classroom sink. She quickly headed that way—forgetting the splatter of sparkly purple paint in front of her. She had just crossed the paper when she realized what she'd done.

"Ohhhh..." she said, stopping in her tracks.

"Uh-oh," said Cam.

"Uh-oh," said Sam.

"Uh-oh," said the teacher and the students at the classroom door.



"What have we here, my little friends?" the teacher asked. The class smiled and giggled at the sparkle-purple-paint-explosion across the classroom floor. "It looks like you were hoping to make some artwork. Is that right?"



Cam and Sam slowly nodded their heads.

"Well, do you know what? You did it! What we have here is a work of classroom-pet art. What do you think, class?"

"Hooray!" the class cheered.



Amid all the cheers, the teacher got a sudden idea. "Class, class!" she said.

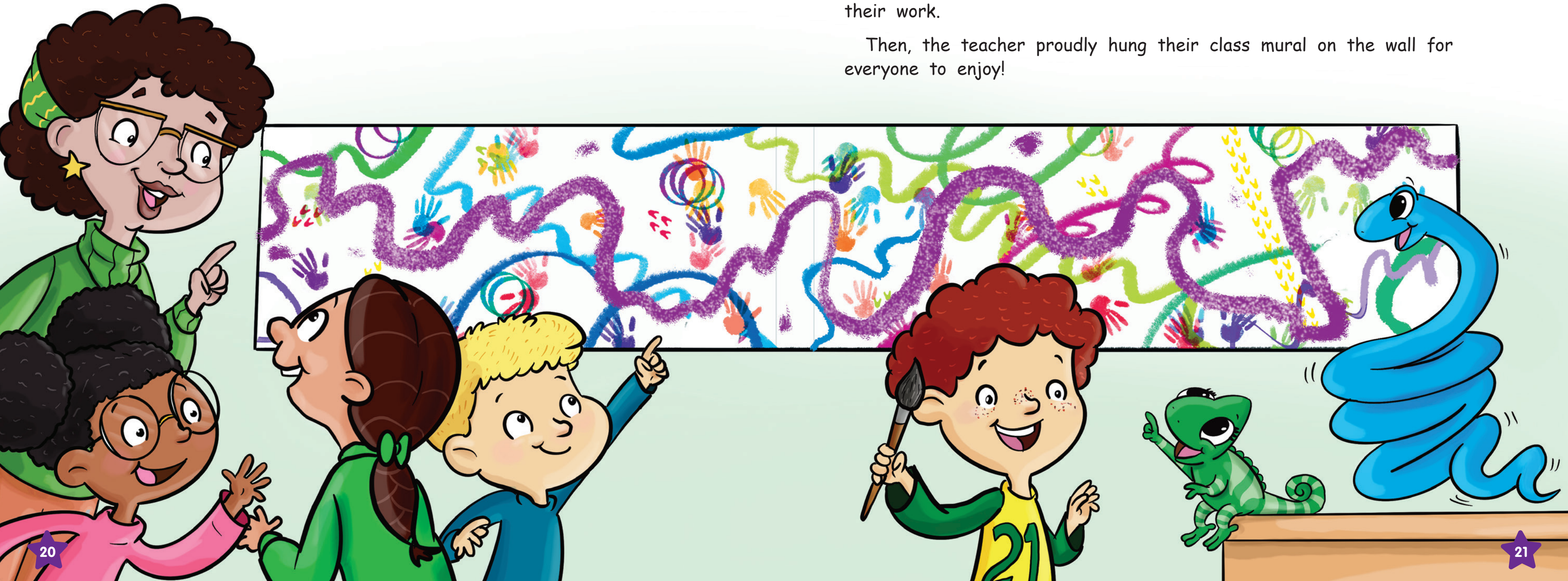
"Yes, yes?" they replied.

"What do you say we all work together to make a class mural, including our friends Cam and Sam?"

"Hooray!" the class cheered again.

Quickly, the teacher and class cleaned up the floor and hung Cam and Sam's art with the rest. Then, the teacher spread out a long roll of paper. One by one, the students and teacher painted their hands in all different colors and stamped them across the sheet. Cam stamped her feet, and Sam stamped his coils. They all stood back and admired their work.

Then, the teacher proudly hung their class mural on the wall for everyone to enjoy!



Notes for the Grown-ups

This book allows for a rich shared reading experience for children who are early and developing readers. The images help new readers to tell the story, either as they read or as they are read to. What a valuable tool for building the confidence new readers need to embark on the adventures that await them while reading!

To extend this reading experience, do one or more of the following:

Look online to find the types of prints different animals make. How are they alike? How are they different?

Experiment with paint, mixing different colors and amounts. How many hues and shades can you make?

Use your senses to think of describing words about paint. Think about how it looks, smells, and feels. Does it make a sound? Do not taste it, of course!

After reading, come back to the book again and again. Rereading is an excellent tool for building literacy skills.

Make your own handprint mural in different colors and hang it on the wall.

What Lives on Earth?

Teacher's Guide



Day 8 Preparation and Materials

Morning Meeting

- **Materials:** *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1); “I Listen” video
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the video.

Literacy

- **Materials:** *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2); copy of *Cam and Sam’s Colorful Adventure*; paper; paint; paintbrushes; palettes or paper plates.
- **Preparation:** Prepare palettes or paper plates with paint.

Literacy Explorations

- **Preparation:** Prepare to use the gel bags students created on Day 7. Select six to eight previously taught letters to name for students. Ensure that each Literacy Exploration center is prepared.

Physical Development

- n/a

Phonological Awareness

- **Materials:** Blending routine (card 7)

Mathematics

- **Materials:** hexagon, trapezoid, rhombus, and parallelogram pattern blocks (one of each for each student)
- **Preparation:** Locate the circle, triangle, square, and rectangle cutouts from Day 6 and the *Animal Pattern Block Templates* from Day 7.

Social Development

- **Materials:** *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16); “Listening” social story poster; crayons
- **Preparation:** Locate student-created social story books from Day 5.

Fine Motor Development

- **Materials:** *Sky Writing* routine (card 12); Lowercase q (page 8 of *Student Activity Book*)

Social Studies

- **Materials:** *Introduce Vocabulary* routine (card 6); Zoo vocabulary concept card; Zoo Map (page 9 of *Student Activity Book*); crayons

Creative Explorations

- **Materials:** clay
- **Preparation:** Prepare a palm-sized piece of clay for each student.

Music and Movement

- **Materials:** “Caring for a Pet” audio recording (caringforapet.mp3) and lyrics (page 96)
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the audio recording of the song.

Closing Circle

- **Materials:** *Closing Circle* routine (card 18)
- **Preparation:** Locate the KWL chart from Day 1.



If you have access to the digital manipulatives, you may choose to use the digital pattern blocks and pattern block mats in place of the noted materials during the Mathematics lesson.

Morning Meeting



1. Follow the *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1).
2. Have students turn and talk with partners to describe what a star looks like.
3. Share the “I Listen” video. Have students wiggle their fingers in the air each time they see a star.

★ ★ Free Play

Free Play is a fundamental part of the *Explore & Learn* day. See page 13 for free play ideas related to this unit.



Literacy



Alphabet Knowledge Warm-Up

1. Gather students together, and follow the *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2) to teach the letter of the day. Choose which letter to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.)

Whole-Group Lesson

2. Display the book *Cam and Sam’s Colorful Adventure*. Say, “We read *Cam and Sam’s Colorful Adventure*. In the story, Cam and Sam want to paint like the kids in class, but they have trouble using the paints. Today, we will reread the book, then create artwork with paint, just like Cam, Sam, and the students in the class.”
3. Read the book aloud.
4. Have students move to their workspaces. Display pages 20-21 from the book. Challenge students to use the paint and paintbrushes to create the same prints that Cam, Sam, and the students created in the book. Allow time for students to experiment with the materials.
5. Pause, and have students share strategies for creating the prints. Encourage students to try the suggestions of their peers.

Literacy Explorations



Meet with one group to deliver Small-Group Lesson 3 (see page 16), while the rest of the students engage in self-chosen centers. For more information about independent learning centers, see page 17.

Physical Development



1. Gather students together. Ask if they have ever observed a group of ants. Allow time for students to share connections and experiences. Say, “When an ant finds food, the other ants walk in a line to locate the food. We are going to pretend to be ants. I’ll be the leader first. You follow me!”
2. Have all students line up behind you. Create a path around the space with students following you. As you walk, add movements, such as hopping, crouching, reaching, and twirling, for students to mimic.
3. Place students in small groups of four or five students. Select a leader for each group and have students follow their leaders. After about one minute, switch leaders. Continue until all students have had the chance to lead their groups.

Phonological Awareness



1. Gather students together in a circle. Say, “Words have parts called syllables. You can feel them by placing the back of your hand under your chin as you say a word.” Have students position their hands. Say the word *penguin*, deliberately pausing between each syllable. Tell students, “The word *penguin* has two syllables because my chin touches my hand two times. The first syllable is *pen* and the second syllable is *guin*.”
2. Tell students they will play a listening game. Say, “I will say the syllables in a word, and you will blend them together to say the word.” Follow the *Blending* routine (card 7), using the following two-syllable words: *penguin*, *rhino*, *beetle*, and *tiger*.
3. For three- or four-syllable words (e.g., *crocodile*, *centipede*, *chimpanzee*, and *orangutan*), model and teach students how to tap from their shoulders to their wrists as they say each syllable, and to sweep their hands down their arms as they blend the syllables together.

Language Development Support

Prepare images of each animal. Have students locate the corresponding images after they blend the syllables.



★ ★ Teacher-Choice Read-Aloud

Per the pacing plan suggestions on page 38 of the *Management Guide*, after the phonological awareness activity is a good time in the *Explore & Learn* day for a teacher-choice read-aloud.



Mathematics

15-20
minutes

whole group



independent work

Whole-Group Lesson

1. Gather students together. One at a time, hold up the circle, triangle, square, and rectangle cutouts from Day 6. Have students identify each shape. Say, “You have gotten so good at identifying these shapes. Today we will work on some shapes that are a little more challenging.”
2. Distribute a hexagon, trapezoid, rhombus, and parallelogram pattern block to each student. One at a time, display one of the pattern blocks. Say the name of the shape, and have students locate their corresponding pattern block. Allow time for students to observe each shape. Ask the following questions:
 - How many sides?
 - How many corners?
 - How is it the same as a ____?
 - How is it different from a ____?

Independent Practice

3. Have students move to their workspaces and use the animal *Pattern Block Mats* from Day 7 to practice manipulating shapes. As students work, circulate and engage students in conversations that use the new shapes. For example, you might say, “Show me where you used a hexagon in your animal,” or “What shape did you use for the head?”

Social Development

10-15
minutes

whole group



independent work

1. Gather students together, and display the front of the “Listening” social story poster. Note that in the story, Cam learns to listen more carefully. Say, “Let’s practice listening for small sounds.” Instruct students to take seven deep breaths, just like Cam. Then, have them listen to the sounds of the classroom. Have students share the sounds they hear and what they think is making those sounds.
2. Tell students to think about the sounds that might exist in their stories. Say, “You might think about adding things that make sounds to your illustrations.” Distribute social stories, and allow time for students to look at and think about their illustrations. Have students make plans for details they could add to their drawings and share their plans with partners.
3. Have students move to their workspaces and continue to work on their social stories. Encourage students to add more details to their pictures. Support the remaining students in completing step 5 of the *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16) by scribing their stories.

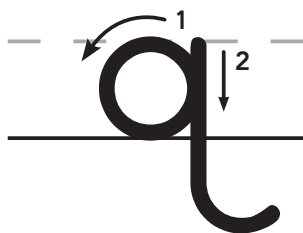
Fine Motor Development

10-15
minutes

whole group



independent work



1. Have students move to their workspaces, and say, “Today, we will be writing lowercase *q*.” Write lowercase *q* in clear view of students.
2. Follow the *Sky Writing* routine (card 12) to make *q*. As you model making the lines in the air, say, “Curve around, up, down, hook back.” Have students practice.
3. Model writing *q* in clear view of students. As you make the movements with your writing tool, say, “Curve around, up, down, hook back.”
4. Have students complete *Lowercase q* (page 8 of *Student Activity Book*). As students work, monitor for proper pencil grasp, pressure, and paper positioning, correcting as needed.

Social Studies

15-25
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and ask, “Have you ever been to the zoo?” Allow time for students to share experiences and connections. Follow the *Introduce Vocabulary* routine (card 6), using the *Zoo* vocabulary concept card.
2. Have students brainstorm the types of things they might find at the zoo. After accepting a variety of animals, guide them to discuss other things they might find at the zoo, such as bathrooms, snack stands, and paths.
3. Have students move to their workspaces and complete *Zoo Map* (page 9 of *Student Activity Book*). Provide the following instructions for completion:
 - Circle the animal that is next to the lion.
 - Trace the path you would take to get from the snack stand to the aquarium.
 - Color the animals that share an enclosure.
 - Draw a square around the bathrooms.
 - There is an empty enclosure. Add an animal.

Language Development Support

Provide time for partners to talk about their zoo maps. You may provide the following prompts:



- What animals are at this zoo? What do you know about these animals?
- Tell your partner how you would get from the aquarium to the flamingos.
- Tell about the animal you added to the empty enclosure.

Creative Explorations

15-25
minutes

1. Gather students together, and say, "Today, you are going to make an animal out of clay. You can make any animal." Explain that when creating something, it is often helpful to have a plan. Provide wait time for students to determine the animal they want to make.
2. Have students close their eyes. Say, "Think about the body parts your animal has. Does it have legs? How many? What shape is its body? Does it have ears? Think about how you will create each body part. You can squish, roll, and stack your clay to create the right shapes." Have students turn and talk with partners to share their plan for creating their animals.
3. Have students move to their workspaces. Distribute clay, and provide time for students to create.
4. When students have finished, have them share their animals. Prompt students with the following questions, if needed. **Note:** Allow the animals to dry and harden. Students will be creating homes for their animals on Day 9.
 - What animal did you create?
 - What body parts does your animal have?
 - Why did you choose to make the animal?
 - What was challenging about creating your animal?

Music and Movement

10-15
minutes

1. Gather students together, and play the audio for "Caring for a Pet." Encourage them to join in as they are comfortable.
2. Have students think of additional ways they can care for a pet and add a couple new verses to the song (e.g., *I take my pet for a walk, I give my pet a treat, I fill my pet's water bowl*).

Closing Circle

5-10
minutes

1. Follow the *Closing Circle* routine (card 18).
2. Display the KWL chart created on Day 1. Review the chart and have students add additional questions to the *Would Like to Know* column and new learning to the *Learned* column. Record student responses.

Card 1

Morning Meeting

Objective: Students will build community through safe, predictable routines.

Materials: Daily Picture Schedule Cards ([schedulecards.pdf](#); optional)

Gather and Greet

1. Signal to the whole group that it is time to gather for the morning meeting. You may choose to use a song as a transition.
2. Gather students together in a circle. Remind students about personal space and the importance of keeping their hands and feet to themselves.
3. Have students greet each other. You may choose to do a whole-class greeting with a song or have students pass one of the following greetings around the circle by greeting the peers next to them:
 - high five
 - elbow bump
 - fist bump
 - wave

Our Day

4. Share the plan for the day. This can be done by reviewing the *Daily Picture Schedule Cards* together or through a morning message—a short note addressed to the class that includes one or two main events that will take place during the day. The daily learning objectives are included in the *Teacher's Guide* for your easy reference.

Theme

5. Have students engage with the theme, color, shape, and/or phrase of the week. Ideas are included in the daily lesson plans in the *Teacher's Guide*.

Card 2

Teach Letters and Sounds

Objective: Students will learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent to support reading readiness and emergent writing skills.

Materials: Letter Cards ([lettercards.pdf](#))

Preparation: Choose which letters to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.) Prepare to share the selected Letter Cards.

Name It

1. Display the selected Letter Card, and say, "This is the letter _____. This is a capital _____ (point to the capital letter), and this is a lowercase _____ (point to the lowercase letter)."
2. Point to the Letter Card, and say, "What letter is this?" (Students respond with the letter name.)

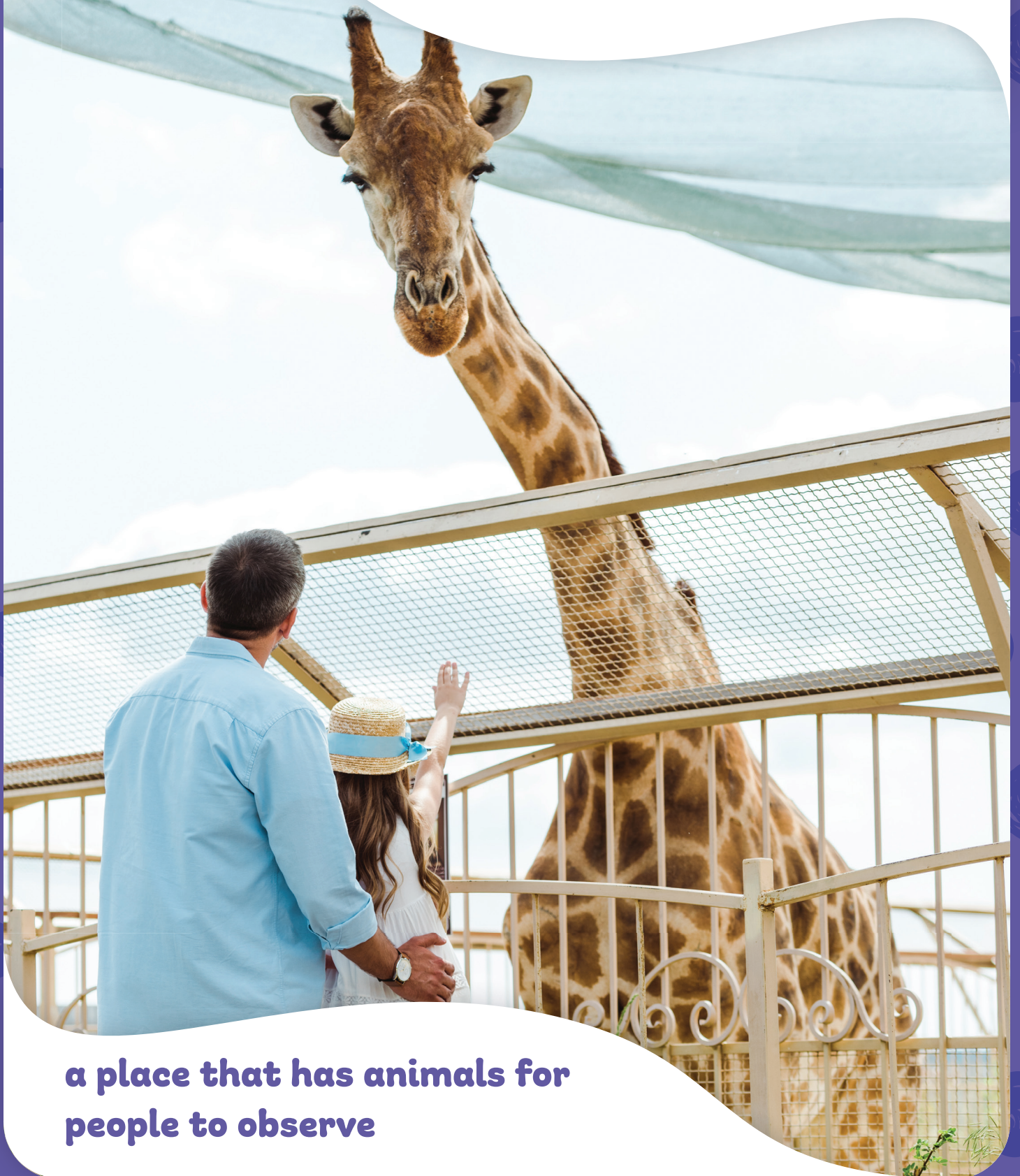
Say It

3. Say the sound the letter represents, and discuss how the sound is formed. Have students repeat the sound several times.

Write It

4. With your finger, trace the capital letter on the card. Narrate your movements, describing the starting point and the types of lines you are forming.
5. Ask students to hold up their pointer fingers and form the lines of the uppercase letter on flat surfaces. Have students repeat the sound the letter makes while they are forming the letter.
6. Repeat steps 4–5 with the formation of the lowercase letter.

zoo



**a place that has animals for
people to observe**

ZOO

Related Words

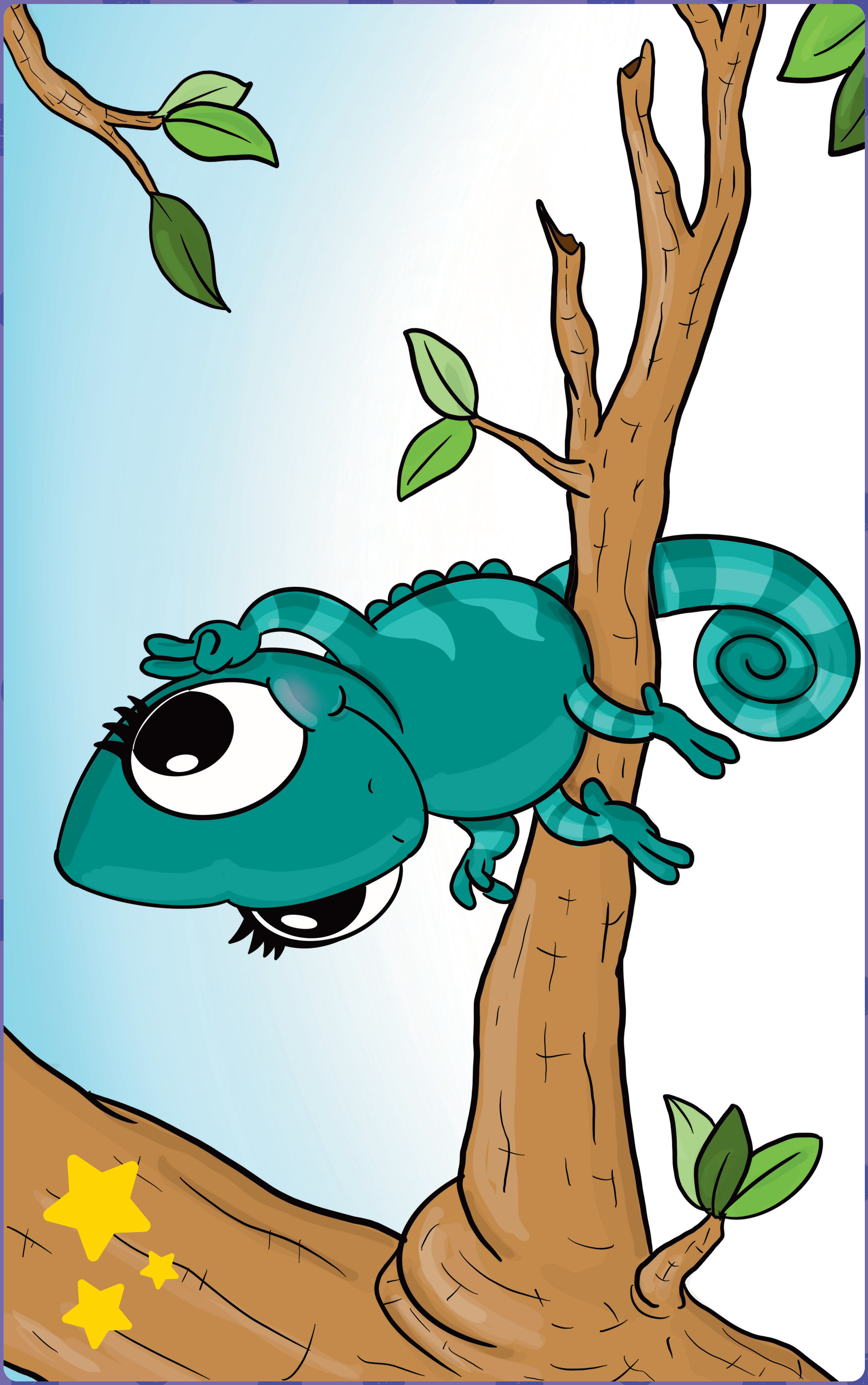
aquarium habitat zookeeper

Sentence

I like to watch the monkeys play together at the **zoo**.

Engage

- ★ Which animals do you think are the biggest and smallest at the zoo?
- ★ If you were a zookeeper, which part of the zoo would be your favorite part to work in? Why?
- ★ Can you pretend to be your favorite animal? Move like it would move, and make the sound it makes. We will guess what you are.
- ★ Look at the picture. What animal is shown? What do you know about this animal?



Listening

Cam E. Chameleon and her class are in the middle of a very serious conversation at morning meeting. They are deciding what kind of class pet they would like to take care of. Siam wants a mouse, Ray wants a pony, and Cam really wants a beetle. When Cam is excited about what she is saying, she sometimes forgets to listen to other people's ideas.

Ms. Lee is starting to notice that everyone in the class is speaking at the same time, and the volume of the voices in the room is getting louder and louder. She decides to have everyone stop to take deep breaths. Cam feels her body go from tense to calm after the seventh breath.

Then, Ms. Lee asks the class what they can do to make sure that everyone has a turn to speak.

Siam raises his hand and says, "We all need to listen to each other."

Ray adds, "Only one person should talk at a time."

Then Cam adds, "We should have a chance to ask questions, too!"

Ms. Lee tells the class that their suggestions are great ideas for good listening. She draws pictures on the board so they can all remember. Then she adds the words "Things We Do to Listen" to the top. They all say the three ideas together: **listen to each other, one person talks at a time, and ask questions.**

The class agrees that this is a good list. Each person gets to talk about the pet they want, and everyone listens, asks questions, and makes sure only one person is talking at a time. After the class discussion, they decide that a mouse would be the most interesting pet. Siam told the class many interesting facts about mice. They can't wait for their own.

Key Words

conversation

discussion

listening

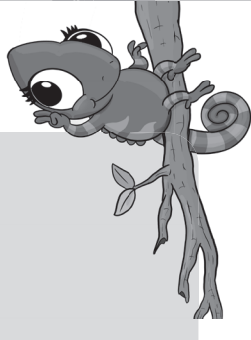
louder

questions

speak

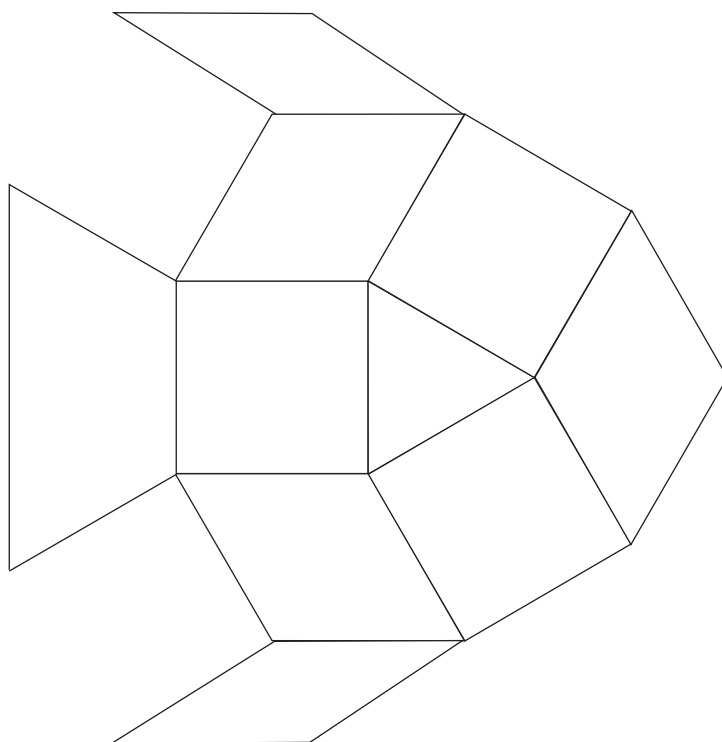
talk

volume



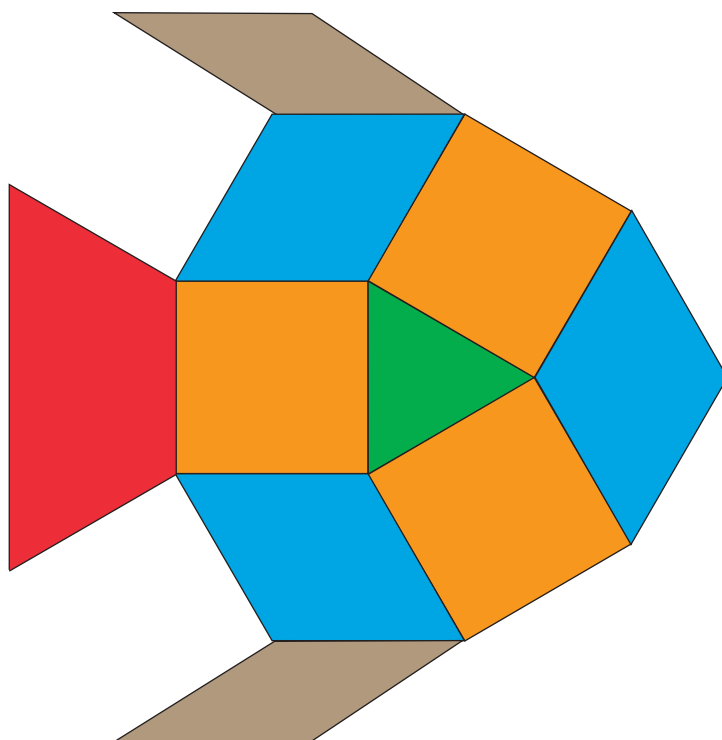
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Pattern Block Mat



fish

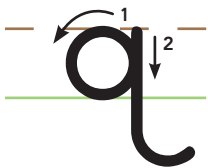
Pattern Block Mat



fish

Name: _____

Lowercase q



Adults, read this aloud: Start at each star. Trace each letter. Then, write your own letters.

Name: _____

Zoo Map



Adults, read this aloud: Use the map to follow the directions.

Social Development and Executive Functioning

Social development and executive functioning include skills and competencies that are essential to getting along with others and managing cognitive processes to regulate behavior. Developing these skills is essential in early childhood as young learners set the foundation for healthy identity development and strong interpersonal relationships.

There are six components that will be assessed in this area:

- **Building Relationships**—Building relationships is the ability to establish and maintain relationships with peers and adults. This involves communicating with others, working together to achieve shared goals, and navigating social situations that may involve differences or conflicts.
- **Social Awareness**—Social awareness is the capacity of early learners to become aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others. This involves feeling empathy and showing care for others. Students use cues and situational context to learn that other people's perspectives may be different from their own. Social awareness also involves understanding and navigating social norms.
- **Decision-Making**—Decision-making involves the processes through which prekindergarten students gather information and make choices that balance their own needs and rights with others' needs and rights. When making personal choices and engaging in social interactions, students consider different ideas and solutions. They also reflect on and evaluate the consequences of their decision-making.
- **Working Memory**—Working memory is the capacity to hold information in mind for a short amount of time. Young learners draw on working memory to process information and complete tasks. This includes focusing when gathering information, organizing thoughts and information, following multistep directions, and problem-solving.
- **Attention**—Attention involves the ability to take in information from the environment and select and focus on one or more things. Students at this level are developing their abilities to sustain attention for increasing lengths of time. Attention involves focusing sufficiently to understand information or perform a task and ignore distractions.
- **Self-Control**—Self-control is the ability to manage one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions. This includes regulating emotions in various social situations, delaying gratification, and controlling impulses to make thoughtful and intentional choices.



Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist

Date: _____

Teacher Directions: During each two-week unit, use this checklist to indicate each child's level based on your observations. Use the following symbols, and include notes about their work when possible.



Advancing



Meeting



Emerging



Beginning

Student Name	Building Relationships	Social Awareness	Decision-Making	Working Memory	Attention	Self-Control

Social Development and Executive Functioning Rubric

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use the *Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist* to summarize these skills throughout this unit. Based on your notes and annotations on the checklist, determine at which level the student is working for each criterion. Circle or highlight the rating for each component.

	Advancing	Meeting	Emerging	Beginning
Building Relationships	Builds, sustains, and expands relationships.	Builds and sustains relationships.	Starting to build and sustain relationships.	Starting to build relationships with support.
Social Awareness	Considers the needs, desires, and perspectives of others when making choices.	Is aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs and desires of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs of others with support.
Decision-Making	Considers multiple ideas when making choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Makes choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices with support.
Working Memory	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions and solve problems.	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions.	Starting to recall information to follow directions.	Starting to recall information for short amounts of time with support.
Attention	Focuses and sustains attention for increasing periods of time.	Focuses and sustains attention.	Starting to focus and sustain attention.	Starting to focus on one thing with support.
Self-Control	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in various social situations.	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in routine situations.	Starting to manage own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions.	Starting to manage own feelings and thoughts with support.