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# Introduction

*Common Sense Science – Vertebrates* can be used in a single or multilevel classroom, homeschool, co-op, or science club. Everything you need for a complete study of vertebrates is in this book and the **Student Materials Packet**. Older students will need access to basic reference materials.

## How to Use the Multilevel Approach

The lessons in this book include foundational content and appropriate activities for third through sixth grades. First and second grade activities are also included so that younger students can be included in multilevel teaching situations. For example, when learning about birds, a first grader will learn that there are three kinds of feathers. This student is exposed to more information but not expected to retain it. In the same lesson, a sixth-grade student will name the three types of bird feathers and explain how birds fly.

In the activity sections, icons are used to designate the levels in specific assignments.



indicates the first level, which is the non-reading or early reading student. This level mainly applies to first and second grade students.



is used for the second level. This includes the student who is still working to be a fluent reader. This level is primarily designed for third and fourth grade students.



denotes the third level, or fluent reader. This level of activities will usually apply to fifth and sixth grade students.

Choose the directions that fit the age of your student. If you are teaching multiple grades, start with the younger students' directions.

## Vocabulary Words

“If I know the vocabulary, I know the content. If I know the content, I know the vocabulary.”

*Dr. Ruth Beechik*

Vocabulary words are introduced in the context of each lesson. A new word must be met fifteen times or so before it becomes a part of our speaking vocabulary, so use the words frequently as you present and discuss the material. You can also supplement the lessons with easy-to-read library books on the subject giving them even more opportunities to “meet” the words.

A vocabulary word list is included in the **Student Materials Packet**. Give students the appropriate word list for each lesson and instruct them to use the words in discussion and writing assignments for reference and review. Students can make a vocabulary book by gluing the word list strips onto a sheet of paper.

## Graphic Organizers

“Tell me something and I forget. Show me something and I remember. Involve me in something and I learn.”

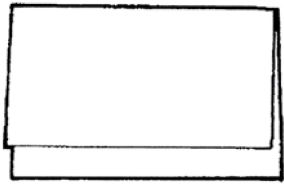
*Dinah Zike*

*Common Sense Science – Vertebrates* uses *3D Graphic Organizers* to help students of all levels better understand concepts by taking complicated information and breaking it down into visual parts. Although the content for the level will generally be the same, assignments and expectations for recording information

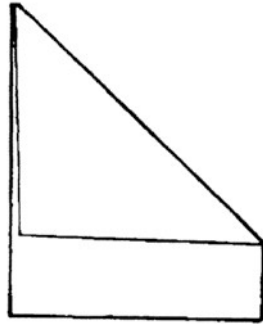
learned will vary for each level. To make the Graphic Organizers, you will need the accompanying **Student Materials Packet**.

There are three basic folds used to construct the Graphic Organizers. Practice making these three basic food folds before you introduce them to your students.

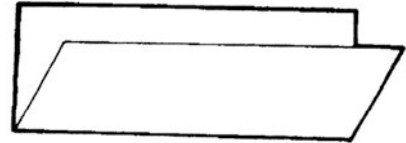
Several of the *3D Graphic Organizers* expand over a series of lessons. For this reason, you will need a storage system for each student's *3D Graphic Organizers*. A pocket folder or a re-closable plastic bag works well.



Hamburger



Taco



Hot Dog

The Graphic Organizers used in this program were created by Dinah Zike and used with her permission. To learn more visit [www.dinah.com](http://www.dinah.com).

## Labs

The study of science is based on the Scientific Method – make an observation, come up with a question or concept, make a prediction (hypothesis), experiment, and draw conclusions. Labs implementing this method provide context for the information found in the science lessons, increasing understanding as well as retention. These steps can be overwhelming to young children and should be used as a guideline to avoid frustrating them.

To simplify the process, the labs in *Common Sense Science* use the following approach:

### Students

- are asked a question or presented a concept
- make a prediction of what will happen
- experiment and observe
- draw a conclusion based on what they have observed

Students will record their predictions, observations, experiments, and conclusions in a Lab Book.

The following lab materials list will help you to prepare. Labs can be completed by the class or by each student.

### Lab 3-1

3 goldfish  
3 small containers  
2 large bowls  
2 thermometers  
aquarium fish net  
ice water  
watch with second hand

### Lab 6-1

cardboard shoe box  
salt  
wooden spoon

### Lab 8-1

small glass container  
thermometer  
large bowl

**Lab 8-2**

empty coffee can  
masking tape  
flashlight  
construction paper

**Lab 12-1**

pear  
orange

**Lab 13-1**

2 glass jars with lids  
cotton balls  
small cardboard box  
water  
2 thermometers

**Lab 16-1**

2 cups cooled, strong coffee  
2 glass containers  
white cloths  
clear plastic wrap  
thermometer

**Lab 16-2**

2 paper cups  
shortening  
2 thermometers  
freezer

**Additional Materials Needed**

Students will need a **Student Materials Packet** which contains:

- Vocabulary words
- Graphics pages for Organizers and Labs

Each student will also need pencils, scissors, glue, colored pencils or crayons, index cards, manila file folders or 12" x 18" cardstock paper, and multi-colored 8.5" x 11" paper and cardstock. Each student will need a large re-closable bag to keep paper projects safe.

**How to Use this Book**

Lessons in the *Common Sense Science* series are divided into 18 three-day weeks. With this schedule, you will be able to complete two books a year.

Days 1 and 2 introduce content and the vocabulary needed to understand it. The lessons are scripted, so the teacher just needs to read them to the students. Older students may want to read the lessons and work independently. As you read, show them the images that will help them visualize what is being taught and then discuss what they have learned. Students will then have an opportunity to recreate and record what they have learned in a visual format called a Graphic Organizer that teaches and reviews the information.

During this time, they will also experiment with the material through labs that use household items and are easy to complete. They will practice exploring concepts by predicting outcomes, experimenting, and drawing conclusions.

On Day 3, students will have opportunities to explore and further investigate the subject matter covered during the week. Choose activities that your students are most interested in and fit your time schedule. Include library books, videos and other teaching tools available through the Internet to further enrich your students' learning experience.