

Using *Chickadee* to Support Learning Success — in the Classroom, in the Library and at Home.

Looking for kid-friendly material for your primary students? *Chickadee* Magazine, aimed at readers ages 6 to 9, is an excellent classroom companion. For more than 30 years, *Chickadee* has been popular reading entertainment for students and an invaluable teaching aid for teachers.

The *Chickadee* editors develop each issue with the understanding of the diverse abilities of their emerging readers — from learning to decode text to the ability to read longer, more sustained pieces. Some features are light on text to encourage readers, such as the monthly **Mish Mash** joke page or the fact-centric **Did You Know?** Some bits, like the **What Is It? puzzle**, use images to engage its younger readers. Longer features, such as the regular **Discovery feature, original short fiction**, or more in-depth procedural writing in the **Craft** and **Dr. Zed Science** departments, cater to the upper end of the magazine's age bracket.

Animal of the Month introduces students to a diverse range of animals, and ties in nicely to the Life Science strand in the science curriculum. **Animal of the Month** typically features a “wow” shot of the featured animal taking up well over a page on the spread that's quick to draw readers in – large enough for sitting a class down on the floor with to introduce a specific type of animal to a group

of students. You can use this section as a model, to introduce the animal, and cue kids to guess its habitat and specific adaptations to help identify the needs of the animal. As well the engaging, age-appropriate text explores major physical and behavioural characteristics of different animals, and offers a detailed map highlighting where the animal lives.

The Dr. Zed experiments introduce a procedural scientific method to children. Using materials that can be easily collected, the experiments work well as part of the instructional day or as a supplement to encourage scientific inquiry and technological problem solving. **Dr. Zed** uses strong visuals to engage readers, highlighting and defining key terms (e.g., force, energy, molecules) in language that's kid-friendly.

Both **Dr. Zed** and the regular **Craft** can be used during the language arts block for either writing or reading – for instance, having students demonstrate an understanding of various text forms (e.g., instructional), by working on **Dr. Zed** experiments and crafts presented in a step-by-step format in the magazine. Or, these could be used as a language learning centre positioned around the classroom. Students could describe how they made their craft or did the experiment, which would benefit hands-on and kinesthetic learners.

Biased as I may be as the former kids' page editor at the magazine, my teaching experience has shown me that *Chickadee* is a valuable tool to meet the changing needs of students during the primary years — and is a welcome addition to the classroom.

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