



Ranger Rick

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

After students have read “Smile—It’s a Sloth!” pages 18–23, ask each to write a description of a day in the life of a typical *pale-throated sloth*. They can write it from the point of view of (1) a scientist who is watching the sloth’s behavior or (2) from an actual pale-throated sloth who is keeping a diary. Share the stories aloud. Then discuss the following:

- How might a sloth and a scientist view sloth-like activities differently?
- How does “slowness” help a sloth?
- What could people learn from a slow-moving lifestyle?

The Slow Poem student page encourages students to explore slow motion further and to incorporate their thoughts into a poem.

SALTY SCIENCE

After reading this month’s **Ranger Rick Adventures**, pages 25–27, discuss the following questions with the class:

- How does salt work to de-ice sidewalks, driveways, and roads? (*It lowers the freezing point of water, causing the ice to melt.*)
- How does road salt harm the environment? (*It damages nearby trees and vegetation, rusts metal objects, washes into lakes and streams where it harms fish and other wildlife, increases the likelihood of road kill by attracting animals that crave salt onto salted roads, etc.*)
- Why is using salt as a de-icer both a good and bad thing? (*It helps keep sidewalks, driveways, and roads safe to use, but it can be harmful to the environment.*)
- What is the right thing to do? (*Use as little salt as possible or alternatives.*)

Point out that during the past few years, beet juice, sugarcane molasses, pickle brine, and other substances have been mixed in with salt (or used before applying salt) to reduce the amount of salt needed to de-ice. Then invite the class to watch two de-icing methods at work. In one spray bottle, combine one part rock or kosher salt to three parts water (salt needs some water to get started). In a second bottle, pour some of the green liquid found in a pickle jar. Spray the salt water on top of a cup of ice chips. Then spray the pickle brine (which contains salt, sugar, vinegar, and spices) onto a second cup of ice chips. Compare the effectiveness of the two de-icers.

BIRDS OF PARADISE

Before students read “Birds of Paradise,” pages 30–35, have them look at the photos in this story and identify things that are special about these birds.

Once students have read the story, they will know that male birds of paradise have flashy colors, fancy feathers, and show-off dance moves that attract the attention of mates. Point out that many living things have ways to catch the eye—and that other living things have ways to blend in with their surroundings.

Take the class on an outdoor walk. Give children copies of the Colorful or Camo? student page to fill in as they spot both eye-catching and camouflaged living things. After the walk, invite students to fill in any remaining spaces with the names of other living things that stick out or blend in. Discuss why it’s an advantage for some animals to be seen, while others benefit from being camouflaged.





SLOW POEM

Relax! Take your time to think about things that go slowly—then capture your thoughts in a poem. Follow these steps.

- 1 In your own words, explain why moving very slowly is helpful to a sloth.

- 2 Think of some other things that move or happen very slowly. Make a list of "slow things" in the box below.

- 3 Now use some of the ideas you wrote down to compose a poem titled "SLOW." The poem can rhyme or not rhyme, and it can be about whatever slowness means to you.





COLORFUL OR CAMO?

Some things in nature stand out with eye-catching colors or shapes. Other things have camouflage colors or patterns that help them blend in and hide. Go for a walk to find both kinds of things. Write the examples in the chart below.

COLORFUL: Things That Stand Out	CAMO: Things That Blend In
<p><i>Example:</i> Bright red male cardinal sitting on a telephone wire.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Brown stick insect on a twig.</p>

