

# \* Teacher Guide \*

\* natural sciences \*



## POSSUM SUMMER

by  
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All answers should be completed in a full sentence form.

### OBSERVE AND MEASURE

Describe what a possum looks like.

1. White / grey fur / Naked tail / black eyes / five front toes / five rear toes / opposable thumb on back feet / marsupial (pouched)

What is unique about a possum?

1. (US only marsupial / Naked prehensile tail / only marsupial to have opposable thumb / can't get rabies, as body temp is too low / plays dead)

Give three fun facts about the possum

1. (Go to [www.jenklblom.com/funfacts.html](http://www.jenklblom.com/funfacts.html) for examples, but see above in unique)

What animals in this list can get rabies?

1. (Raccoon (yes) / Cow (yes) / Bat (yes) / Possum (no) / Catfish (no) / Skunk (yes) / Rattlesnake (no) / Donkey (yes))

How big is a possum when it is first born?

1. (The size of a bumblebee.)

Make a list of foods possums will eat. Then create a food pyramid for a possum.

1. (A possum will eat almost anything. It is important to not offer a possum processed foods.)

There are other animals in the river bottoms. Pick three from the following list and describe what they eat:

1. (Raccoon / Cow / Bat / Catfish / Rattlesnake / Skunk / Badger / Red-tailed hawk / Donkey)

### CLASSIFY

Write the genus and species of the following animals:

1. Raccoon (*Procyon Lotor*)
2. Possum (*Didelphis marsupialis*)
3. Rattlesnake (Diamondback) (*Crotalus atrox*)
4. Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
5. Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)
6. Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
7. Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

**Make a list of five animals. Which are warm blooded and which cold blooded?** **INQUIRY**

1. Raccoon (warm blooded)
2. Possum (warm blooded)
3. Rattlesnake (Diamondback) (cold blooded)
4. Red-tailed hawk (warm blooded)
5. Skunk (warm blooded)
6. Badger (warm blooded)
7. Catfish (cold blooded)

**Trade your Experiment information with your partner and discuss their method. Ask yourself the following questions:**

1. What do you like about this idea?
2. What do you not like?
3. DO you think it would work? Yes or no? Please explain your decision.
4. What would you change?

**Using your animal list, order them by size and weight**

1. (Ex: Cow, raccoon, guppy, amoeba)

## **EXPERIMENT**

**Design a full-proof plan for how to hide a possum for an entire day. Don't forget to take the following things into consideration:**

1. School / Teachers / Gym / Bus / Recess / Lunch (yours) / Lunch (possum) / Friends

## **INTERPRET AND COMMUNICATE**

**Explain your experiment plan to fellow students.**

**Discuss rabies by answering the following questions:**

1. How can animals get it? (Being bitten by a carrier)
2. What kind of animals can get it? Reptiles? Mammals? (Warm bloods - Mammals)
3. What is the best way to find out if an animal had rabies? (Brain culture after death)
4. What specific part of the body does rabies attack? (central nervous system)