

# A House for Hermit Crab Lesson Plan

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**Grade Level:** Pre-Kindergarten

**Pet Category:** Aquarium/Fish

**Objectives: A classroom pet will enhance my curriculum by instilling a sense of responsibility and respect for like in my preschoolers. It will increase awareness of the needs of both humans and animals. It will support my curriculum that all living things need more than food and water.**

1. Children will learn responsibility by taking care of our hermit crabs.
2. Children will learn that all living things need more than food and water.
3. Children will learn facts about land and marine hermit crabs.
4. Children will make predictions, sequence and recall details about a story.
5. Children will learn the order of the months and learn that there are 12 months in a year.
6. Children will learn how to make new friends by giving compliments and learning out to make an introduction.
7. Children will feel better about their transition into Pre-K and then moving onto Kindergarten.

**Materials:**

- A House for Hermit Crab By: Eric Carle
- Pictures of hermit crabs
- Hermit Crab Habitat: Hermit Crab Tank, hermit crabs, mulch, food and dishes.
- Paper plates, watercolor paint, pictures of students, decorations for shell.
- Playdough and wikki stixs

A House for Hermit Crab is a great book to read at the beginning of the year to help children make a better transition into Preschool and teaches them how to make new friends. It also is an introduction to a fascinating creature, the hermit crab, as a new pet for the classroom.

**Book Description:**

One day Hermit Crab discovers that he has outgrown his shell. He is frightened and moves into another shell but thinks that it looks too plain. So, each month he finds a new friend to live with him. Eventually, Hermit Crab outgrows his shell and must find an even bigger shell to make his home. He is reluctant to leave his new friends but finally does, and a little hermit crab, who

promises to be good to Hermit Crab's friends, moves into the shell. Hermit Crab finds a bigger shell in which to reside, but this time he isn't afraid. He knows that he can make new friends.

### **Lesson Plan:**

First ask students if they know what this is (hold up a replica and picture of a hermit crab). Let them answer.

Ask them to tell you everything they know about hermit crabs. Make a diagram on the white board and write down their answers. Then give them a little lesson on hermit crabs. Show them pictures of both types, land and marine. Tell them the hermit crab in our story is a marine hermit crab.

#### **Two Types of Hermit Crabs**

For the sake of their care, hermit crabs can be divided into two groups. The first group is the marine hermit crabs. These crabs spend most of their life underwater and rarely leave for land. The second group, the land hermit crabs, spends most of their life on land but need access to both fresh- and saltwater to survive and breed.

#### **Land**

Believe it or not, land hermit crabs have gills. They need high humidity to keep their gills damp. Most land hermit crabs keep some water in their shells to keep their gills damp. However, land hermit crabs require access to both freshwater and saltwater to keep their gills wet; otherwise the gills will dry out and the crab will suffocate.

#### **Marine**

Most hermit crabs are marine crabs. They rarely if ever leave the water. They are commonly kept in reef fish tanks. Many species exist, with differing compatibilities and temperaments. Like their land cousins, they breathe through gills -- but they don't have to carry around their water to do so. Most can survive briefly out of water as long as their gills are damp. However, this ability is not as developed as it is in land hermit crabs.

#### **Care**

With good care, both types of hermit crabs can survive for years. Many people treat land hermit crabs as "throwaway pets," not realizing that some species can live for more than 20 years. Proper care includes providing your hermit crabs with saltwater and freshwater, and giving them enough bedding to burrow into. Marine hermit crabs are easier; their gills require no special treatment by you to keep themselves alive.

Show them the book, *A House for Hermit Crab*. Ask them what they think the book might be about. Give them an opportunity to respond. Let's find out... and read the story. Stop along the way and ask them what they think will happen next before turning the page. After reading the book ask them questions about the book to test their comprehension:

1. Name some of the animals the hermit crab met. How do these different animals move through the ocean?
2. What is a habitat? Describe hermit crabs habitat.
3. Which sea animal and habitat might a hermit crab want to use for its next habitat?
4. Discuss why hermit crabs need a house.
5. Ask students to give ways the plants and animals helped hermit crab with his house. (for example the snails cleaned his house, the spiky sea urchins protected it, and the lantern fish provided light)

6. Ask students in what ways are they like hermit crabs?

### **Introduce Preschoolers to our Hermit Crab classroom pets**

Ask Preschoolers what they think a land hermit crab might need to live. Write down their answers. Bring out the tank with our new hermit crab pets. Show preschoolers each hermit crab by holding them up. Discuss with them the rules about handling them. Begin to assemble the rest of the habitat by adding a coconut shell huts for hiding, large branch for climbing, fresh water with sponge, bowl with salt water, and food bowl. Show them how to make the mulch moist at the bottom and discuss why this is important. Also discuss types of food they like to eat and give them some fresh veggies and oats to start off.

Tell preschoolers that this will be one of our classroom jobs each day, to take care of our hermit crabs. The children will learn as the year goes on and with the help and supervision of their teacher how to properly take care of the hermit crabs.

We will name our hermit crabs together.

Daily activities with hermit crabs: Observing, feeding, watering, changing food to keep fresh fruit and veggies in their habitat.

Hermit crabs will be in a 10 gallon tank with lid to keep in moisture. They will be on a table in the classroom at a height that preschoolers can easily see into the tank. Preschoolers may look, but not touch the hermit crabs without supervision.

### **Other book activities:**

#### **Art/Make a hermit crab:**

First take a picture of each child pretending to be a hermit crab coming out of its shell. Have preschoolers hold their hands and fingers to look like a claw and squat down. Print photos before beginning art project.



Pass out paper plates and have preschoolers watercolor them. When they are finished, teachers will cut the paper plate into a swirl shape and glue on their photo to the shell. Give each child cutouts of the different sea creatures that went with the hermit crab on its journey. They will glue these cutouts onto the shell along with a little green Easter grass for seaweed. Last attach picture of stone at the bottom.

Draw a picture of our real hermit crabs in their science journal

Using playdough and wikki stixs, make a model of a hermit crab.

**Sequencing Game:**

Pass out picture of the sea creatures the hermit crab encountered to the preschoolers. Have them help you retell the story and as you do place the animals in front of them in the order that they appeared in the story.

**Math:**

Count and sort shells

**Calendar Activities:**

A House for Hermit Crab follows the life of the hermit crab from January to January. Sing the months of the year song. Write the names of the months of the year on our white board. Under each, have children help you attach magnet picture of the sea animal hermit crab encountered that month.

**Music and Rhyming:**

Teach them this rhyme-repeat after me:

*I'm a little like that hermit crab, growing in my shell;*

*Soon enough I'll move along saying goodbye to the preschool bell.*

*I'm a little like that hermit crab, I need the safety of my shell.*

*Yet every month I'm bigger, the lengths of my clothes will tell.*

*I'm a little like that hermit crab, this school is my ocean floor.*

*There are endless possibilities, so many worlds to be explored.*

*I'm a little like that hermit crab, I'm stepping out real soon.*

*Please applaud my courage, even small bells ring a tune.*

*I'm a little like that hermit crab, and though it's sad to be parted;*

*I know the world awaits me-I can't wait to get started.*