



Maggie's Activity Pack

Name _____

What Is A Llama?

Is a llama an animal that you have met?
It has long legs and a neck you can pet.

If people need help, a llama will do
Because this animal will work for you.

Going a long way? It will carry your pack.
A llama walks far with this on its back.

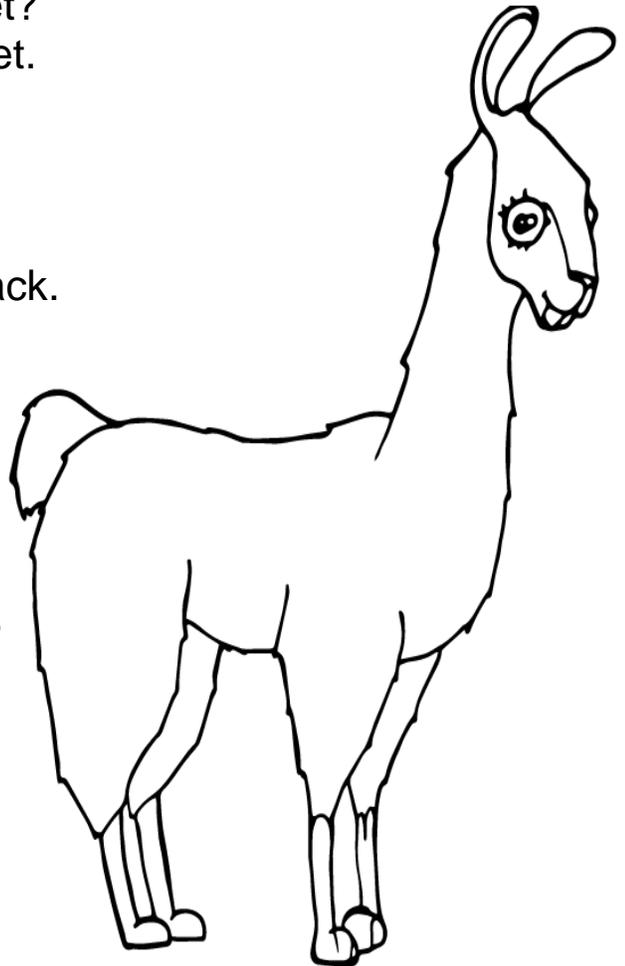
Need a warm coat from llama hair?
Just like a sheep, it is happy to share.

A llama can snort or even hum
When it wants to talk to a llama chum.

A llama likes grass and carrots to eat.
It chows down plants, but never meat!

A llama is fast when it goes on a run,
And it thinks a swim is a lot of fun.

So look for a llama when you go to the zoo.
It may bat its long eyelashes right at you!



TRY THIS:

Circle the words that tell about a llama.

Dear Colleague,

I always like to encourage teachers of young children to forget everything their high school English teacher told them about poetry. If your English teacher was like mine, it was the non-rhyming, metaphorical works that were valued. But for our emerging readers, rhyme is key. We know the importance of phonemic awareness to preschoolers and kindergarteners and also of word families to beginning readers in kindergarten and first grade. Poems like the one in this activity fulfill so many goals for young children. Let's begin with the goal of developing phonemic awareness, as that is where the inspiration for this activity began. We love Anna Dewdney's Llama Llama books. These enchanting tales of a young llama and his mother are told in verse, perfect for developing a sense of rhyme for any child. This essential component of phonemic awareness is necessary for our children to hear. In days gone by, Mother Goose was popularly read to children. We don't seem to do this anymore (for a variety of reasons) but we need to find child-friendly poetic rhymes to fill this gap. The Llama Llama books, published by Viking a Division of Penguin, do this beautifully. Research constantly shows that identifying and producing rhyme is a big predictor of eventual reading success. We, at Maggie's Earth Adventures, highly recommend Dewdney's books. And, we know children find them fun!

We purposely used only high-frequency or easily decodable words in our poem. The word family words are a natural bridge to using onsets and rimes as we develop reading vocabulary. In this llama poem, you can use the rimes (word families) -ack, -um, -eat, and -un. Encourage children to create lists using rimes. For example:

back
jack
lack
pack
rack
sack
tack
black
snack

Depending on the level of your children, you can use more blends or digraphs as onsets. Additionally, you can have children identify other words in the poem such as coat and bat that make for excellent word family lists.

We hope you use this activity in conjunction with Dewdney's Llama Llama books. If so, this activity makes a perfect way to contrast works of fiction and nonfiction. Talk about how the Little Llama in the books acts like a person. Children can identify with Little Llama. In our poem, the description of a llama is based on actual llamas. You can

make a class chart showing the differences between a pretend llama and a real llama. Our follow-up activity asks children to circle the words that tell about a llama. Have children use these words to write their own sentences telling about llamas or you can use the larger llama drawing following this to have children add details such as grass, carrots, a pack, etc. to show their comprehension of the facts in the poem. Remember, coloring is a wonderful way for young children to illustrate comprehension!

Happy teaching,
Dr. Kathy

Goals:

Children read a nonfiction poem about llamas. Words in the poem are high-frequency words or easily decodable vocabulary. Children are asked to circle words that describe real llamas. In addition, the facts in the poem can be used to contrast with the Little Llama in Anna Dewdney's Llama Llama books. The Dear Colleague letter contains a discussion of phonemic awareness and word family lists. The activity is available on the emergent, primary, and intermediate levels and correlates with the Common Core Standards: Craft and Structure, Foundational Skills: Phonological Awareness and Phonics and Word Recognition along with the IRA/NCTE Standard, "Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics)."

