

GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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Grades 3-6

CELEBRATING **Diversity** with **ART**

Thematic Projects for Every Month of the Year

Willet Ryder, Ed. D.

 **GOOD YEAR BOOKS**

Dedication

To Elé and Tama Ryder, and teachers and students everywhere.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special thanks to Eleanor J. Ryder, Tama B. Ryder, Roberta Dempsey, Jennifer L. Bevington, Eden Sommerville, Scott Thomas, William Howe, and the staffs of the Connetquot Public Library and the Patchogue-Medford Public Library. My appreciation also to Christopher Jennison for his original interest in my educational writing.

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Book design by Street Level Studio.
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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 978-1-59647-297-6

Previous ISBN 0-673-36170-5

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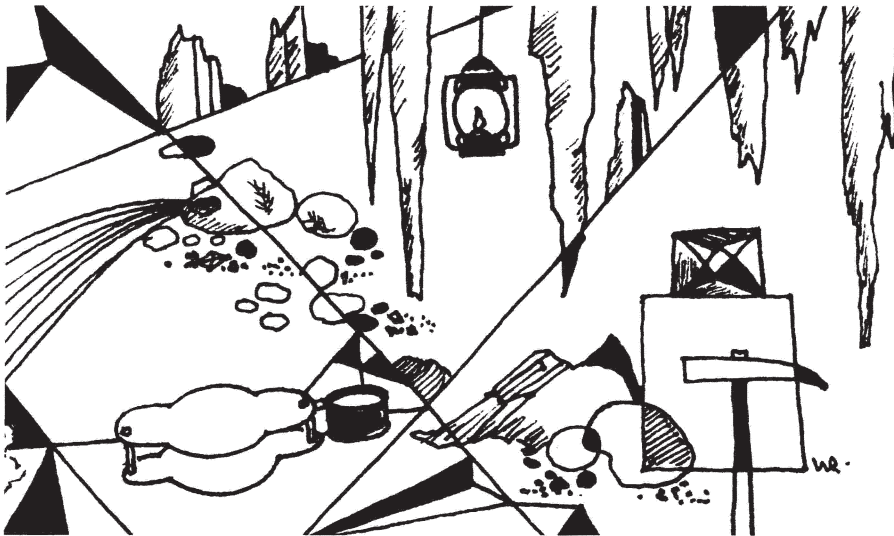


Hobbies are both a mystery and a delight. They're a mystery because many people with hobbies don't always share them with others. They're a delight because of the pure joy they provide to the hobbyist, making hours pass like minutes! Although many hobbies are fairly common, others are quite unusual. When I was a young boy, one of the teens in the neighborhood collected tropical fish. Having an aquarium with a number of tropical fish is not uncommon. This guy, however, had about 100 fish tanks, which ranged in size from about two feet to six feet in length. My friends and I would visit him often, just to gaze in amazement at all those underwater worlds decorating his home. Each tank contained wonderful plant life, rocks, and sunken treasures, and the fish glided through these terrains in mysterious ways. There were giant angelfish and gouramis, Siamese fighting fish, and busy catfish. Pumps blew air bubbles into the watery depths as lights glimmered overhead! This guy's house was better than the local pet store, and that's no fish story!

Yet hobbies can be much simpler than my boyhood recollections of a neighbor's passion for tropical fish. My wife, Eleanor, has always been interested in stamps, for instance, and has collected some wonderful ones over the years. Although the stamps are not mounted in albums, she continues to enjoy saving attractive postage. About ten years ago, she met the late Adam Voltz, a stamp collector extraordinaire. Mr. Voltz collected stamps for a good part of his life. Each year, in an effort to stimulate her students' interest in stamp collecting, Eleanor would invite Mr. Voltz to visit her fourth-grade class to show and discuss his lifelong hobby. The children were fascinated not only by his vast collection, but also by his great stories and charismatic personality. As a result, many of my wife's students have become avid stamp collectors. The main thrust of National Hobby Month is to share special information about and increase knowledge of various hobbies. Not everyone can pursue every hobby, of course, but each of us can benefit by learning a little bit about some of them. In this section of the book, we will focus on art activities that are based on a selection of potential hobbies. Each activity will consist of just a tiny taste of something new—hopefully, whetting the children's appetite for a larger serving.

THE ROCKY ROAD

The quartz crystal glimmers on the tiny shelf, a gift from my daughter's friend, Kathleen Prime. It rests next to a fluorite crystal, which I once bought at a museum. Rocks and minerals are fascinating things and are lots of fun to find, study, and display. Anyone who has ever walked along the shore of an ocean, bay, river, or lake knows that such places can be real "rocky" delights! Streams and brooks also often bubble over with a variety of rock treasures. Rocks and pebbles situated along the water are generally smoothed and polished by natural forces and are fairly easy to find and collect. Many other rocks and minerals are found in the earth and have to be dug out or mined. Rocks and minerals provide a glimpse of our earth's ancient past and serve as indicators that the physical world is constantly changing. Before starting this activity with your class, a visit to the library or to a nearby natural history museum is strongly recommended. It's a good idea to get hold of a set of mineral samples and some hand lenses or magnifying glasses so that the kids can study the rocks more closely.



Materials

- rock and mineral sets
- hand lenses or magnifying glasses
- 8" x 11" composition paper
- 9" x 12" manila paper
- pencils
- crayons

Activity

1. Show some posters and/or books about rocks and minerals, and ask the children how these things form. Where do they come from? What natural forces (for example, water, heat, etc.) help to create them?
2. Distribute some sample rocks and minerals along with the hand lenses and magnifying glasses, and ask the children to carefully study them.
3. Supply the children with 8" x 11" composition paper, and request that they record such things as color, shape, and texture.
4. Next, distribute the 9" x 12" manila paper, pencils, and crayons, and ask each child to carefully draw one of the rock/mineral samples. Be sure each child correctly labels the sample shown in her/his drawing.
5. Last, dispense more 9" x 12" manila paper, and ask the children to imagine that they are on a rock-finding adventure and to draw a scene using both real and imaginary rocks and minerals. Such scenes could include giant caves, old mines, and the like.
6. When the drawings are complete, hold a sharing session and exhibit.

Follow-Up

A real rock collector, from outside the school, is always a treat. If you know of a master rock collector, don't hesitate to invite him/her in for a class visit! In addition, encourage the children, who may have their own rock collections at home, to bring them to class for discussion and exhibit.

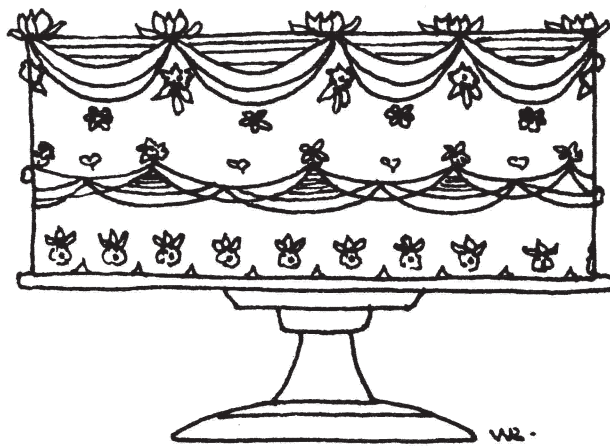
Helpful Books

- Bullis, Douglas. *Crystals: The Science, Mysteries, and Lore*. New York: Crescent Books, 1990.
- Hiscock, Bruce. *The Big Rock*. New York: Atheneum, 1988.
- Pellant, Chris. *Rocks and Minerals*. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1992.
- Shedenhelm, W. R. C. *The Young Rockhound's Handbook*. New York: Putnam's, 1978.

WHAT'S COOKING?

One very tasty hobby is cooking! Anyone who enjoys licking icing bowls, hanging around kitchens, and sampling goodies will probably enjoy cooking. Cooking can be divided into many categories. These include appetizers; soups and salads; main dishes; side dishes; breads; rolls and pastries; and desserts. Ummm! I'm getting hungry just writing these down! Chefs usually specialize in just one of these food areas, often becoming famous for their pastries, salads, or main entrees!

Before introducing this activity to the class, prepare a simple appetizer, from your favorite home recipes, and bring it to school.



Materials

- your appetizer
- paper plates
- napkins
- 8" x 11" composition paper
- 12" x 18" manila paper
- pencils
- crayons
- markers

Activity

1. Serve your appetizer on paper plates, and let the children sample it. After they have completed their sampling, distribute the composition paper and pencils, and ask students to write a brief paragraph about how the food tasted. You might supply the class with a few descriptive words to help stimulate ideas (for example: spicy, bland, smooth, exciting, etc.).
2. Next, pass out the 12" x 18" manila paper, pencils, crayons, and markers, and ask each child to draw his/her own culinary creation. Try to have the students focus on one item, such as the largest and fanciest cake, the biggest serving of spaghetti and meatballs, or the most colorful fruit salad.

3. When the art works are complete, hold a discussion and exhibition.

Follow-Up

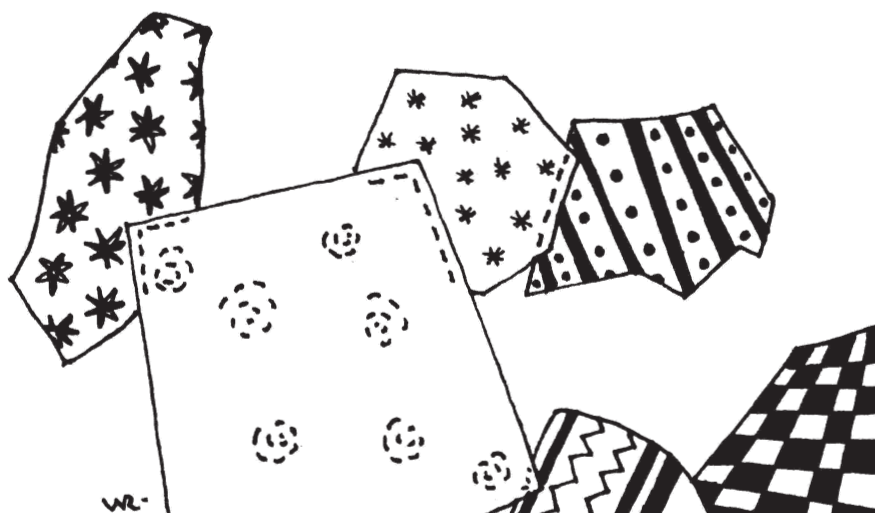
Creating your own class cookbook is a fantastic way to expand on this activity. First, invite each child to bring in a recipe from home, which he/she loves! Collect the recipes, and file them under the different food categories discussed earlier. Next, ask the children to make simple illustrations for their recipes using black marker. The class might also wish to choose a few children to illustrate the cover of the cookbook. Finally, type up the recipes and paste the illustrations in place. Then photocopy, collate, and bind the entire work. Make sure that each child receives a copy and that you have extra copies for the school library and for interested friends and relatives. Needless to say, you and your class may wish to sample some of these recipes during the school year. Enjoy and *bon appétit*!

Helpful Books

- Greene, Karen. *Once Upon a Recipe*. New Hope, PA: New Hope Press, 1987.
- Hayes, Phyllis. *Food Fun*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1981.
- Krementz, Jill. *The Fun of Cooking*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
- Oetker, Dr. August. *Let's Cook*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 1993.

SEWING: A STITCH IN TIME

Sewing and stitchery can be more than just “sew-sew,” it can be great! Without all those skillful stitches, our clothes would fall apart and our buttons would be constantly falling off. This activity is not designed, however, to make us into tailors or clothing designers, but rather to increase our appreciation of the wonderful art of creative sewing. Many museums of folk art contain exhibits of creative stitchery. Some of these designs are abstract, while others are based on patterns handed down from generation to generation. The key to approaching a sewing activity is to think of sewing as a journey into design—one involving a thread and needle rather than a pencil or paintbrush!



Materials

- lots of scrap fabric with varied colors and textures
- thread (varied colors)
- needles
- scissors
- straight pins
- thimbles

Activity

1. Collect a batch of varied fabric scraps, with different patterns, colors, and textures, and bring them to class. A local fabric store may be happy to donate some of their scraps to your class.
2. Show the class some pictures or actual examples of creative stitchery designs and discuss.

3. Explain about threading needles and working safely and carefully.
4. Let each child choose, cut, and arrange several pieces of fabric and try some different stitches using threads of various colors. Encourage the children to experiment with their cutting and sewing.
5. After the children finish their creative designs, display their works.

Follow-Up

Invite a skilled stitchery artist to your class to show her/his work and talk to your students. You might also consider visiting a craft museum where sewing is displayed. Some restored historical villages, such as Old Bethpage Village on Long Island, have special tours for children, allowing them the opportunity to play tailor's apprentice for a few hours. Such an outing will keep the whole class on "pins and needles."

Helpful Books

- Barkin, Carol, and James, Elizabeth. *Slapdash Sewing*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company, 1975.
- Corrigan, Barbara. *I Love to Sew*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974.
- Corrigan, Barbara. *Of Course You Can Sew!* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971.
- Encinas, Lydia Proenza. *A Beginner's Book of Sewing*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1977.
- Katz, Ruth J. *Make It and Wear It*. New York: Walker and Company, 1981.