

# 10 Ways to Use "Letters from a Mystery Animal"

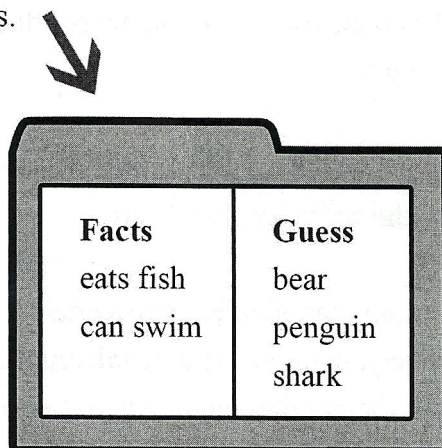
**Including: Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking, Verbal Expression, Math, Geography, Word Recognition, Comparison and Contrast, Technological Skills, Research**

## A. Small Group Reading Instruction

**Materials:** Letter from a Mystery Animal, Mystery Animal Detective Notes, pencils, optional highlighters.

**Note:** the main idea of each step is in boldface for quick reference.

1. Gather your small group and **distribute one copy** of the letter to each student.
2. **Introduce the letter** to the students by telling them they have received a very special letter from a mystery animal, written just for them! Their job is to be "Mystery Animal Detectives" and read the letter to figure out who has written it. Once they figure out who wrote the letter, they will be able to write back to the animal!
3. Inform the students that even though they will work together to solve the mystery, **they must not reveal their guesses about who the mystery animal is until asked by the teacher.** If they have a strong hunch early on, they can write their idea down on their detective notes, but keep it private. (This will help prevent anyone who catches on early from yelling out the answer and stopping the critical-thinking process of children who may be taking longer to figure out the mystery animal's identity.)
4. **Distribute the Mystery Animal Detective Notes** to each child, or display your own copy. (You can do the writing on the detective notes, or have the children do their own writing, depending on your time constraints and lesson objectives.)
5. Explain that after reading the letter from a mystery animal, the **students will use clues from the letter--just like real detectives--to determine the animal's identity.** As a group, you will write clues on the lefthand box of the Detective Notes and record your guesses about what kind of animal is writing on the righthand box of the Detective Notes.



Facts	Guess
eats fish	bear
can swim	penguin
	shark