**ELA Week 4: Non-fiction Reading and Writing Activities**

**Non-fiction** is any written form that is **based on facts** (true information). These include newspaper articles, biographies, descriptions and reports on experiences or events. Whenever you do research, you are reading information that is non-fiction. Often, you may read non-fiction articles or books just for enjoyment. Interesting information can be learned from reading non-fiction. So, read away!

**Activity 1: Reading Comprehension: Animal Studies**

Read the following article. Take note of the most important information in each paragraph (main idea). What new information did you learn? Sometimes, while reading you may encounter new words that are new vocabulary and you may have to look up their meaning to understand the text.

For example, in this article the term “boring” does not mean uninteresting but instead refers to its other definition, meaning **“to drill a hole”** into something or a “drilling” tool. Therefore, a “**boring” tool** would mean a “**drilling” tool.**

Animals are wonderful. If you look closely at how they live, you will find many surprises. It is hard to look closely at insects, because they are very small. Plus, many of them fly away when you come near. But if you have a chance to watch them, you will discover how they live. Watching animals is a job that scientists do, called making observations. They have learned a lot about animals.

Scientists learn about tiny animals, and they have studied insects. They found that insects have tools, and they use those tools to survive. For example, they learned about the sawfly. This is just one animal they have studied.

They call it the sawfly because it possesses a kind of saw. It's not a real saw, but it resembles one, and it works like one. It is actually a part of the sawfly’s anatomy. The sawfly uses the saw to make places where the eggs will be safe. It saws at plants in order to create a space where eggs can go. Afterward, the sawfly does something very special. It makes a sort of homemade glue that fastens the eggs where they are laid. We are not exactly sure how it does that, but if you can watch the sawfly you will see this happen.

Some insects have cutting instruments that work in a similar way as scissors. The poppy-bee is one of these insects. It is a bee that makes its home in wood. This bee has a boring tool, and it uses the tool to bore into old wood. It looks like a tool that a carpenter might use. Carpenters make things out of wood, and like carpenters, poppy-bees makes their nests out of wood.

In addition to insects, scientists observe birds, too. They have studied birds using their bills in order to get what they need. Some birds use their bills to cut into wood. They have sharp bills, and are able to cut a hole in a tree. So, they will use their sharp bills to drill a hole to get inside the tree where insects live, and then they eat the insects.

Every animal is amazing. Even dogs and cats can surprise you. The more you observe animals, the more you will learn. Nature is full of surprises. Every part of every animal has a purpose. Scientists learn more about them every day. Nature is a wonderful part of our world.

**Answer the following questions to check your understanding. You may go back and reread the paragraphs to help you find specific information.**

1. **For what purpose does the saw fly use its saw?**
2. **In what way is the poppy-bee like a carpenter?**
3. **What other animal in the article behaves like a carpenter?**
4. **Why do you think it is important for scientists to study animals?**

**Activity 2: Create a card or write a letter to be dropped off to a family member, friend or neighbour on their doorstep. You may wish to thank a front line worker such as a nurse, doctor, lab technician or any other essential worker such as a grocery store worker or delivery person. Keep in mind that you will want to make your card or letter stand out and include information that is relevant to the person receiving the card.**

**Here are a few helpful hints to get started:**

1. **Decide who will receive the card or letter.**
2. **State your purpose for writing with a polite opening sentence, like, “I am writing to say that I miss you and hope you are doing well.” Or, “Dear Nana, I hope you are keeping busy and getting enough rest.” Or, “I am writing to thank you for all that you do.”**
3. **After your opening sentence, state how you have been spending your days, your feelings, your plans for the near future or funny or interesting things that have happened.**
4. **Give a nice compliment, kind message or positive observation.**
5. **Close your letter or card by stating a nice conclusion such as you hope to see them soon or thank them for being a special person in your life. You may wish to use the term “sincerely,”(followed by your name) or “your friend,” or “yours truly”. Don’t forget to decorate your card or letter with little drawings or designs. If your letter is to a frontline worker or essential worker, remember to include your name, grade (5M) and school. These may be delivered directly to the individual or through a supervisor at their place of work.**
6. **Ask an adult to help you deliver the letter. The random act of kindness will be a welcome surprise!**