

Dangerous Animals

Unit Summary

Students read the story of *Doctor DeSoto* by William Steig and then ponder the Essential Question, *How do we know what is real and what is make believe?* Throughout the unit, students use the story's context to learn about fact and fiction, the importance of going to the dentist, and the characteristics of dangerous animals. They brainstorm a list of dangerous animals thinking about, *What makes an animal dangerous?* Then in small groups students use the *Visual Ranking Tool* to rank the list of dangerous animals from least to most dangerous and explain their reasoning for their rankings. As a culminating activity, students present their conclusions about whether the DeSotos were justified in refusing to treat "dangerous animals" or animals that eat mice. They provide evidence from the story or other stories to defend their conclusions.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
How do we know what is real and what is make believe?
- **Unit Questions**
What makes an animal dangerous?
If you were Doctor DeSoto, would you treat the fox?
- **Content Questions**
What is fact and what is fiction in the story?
Why do the DeSotos refuse to treat dangerous animals?
Why is it important to go to the dentist?

Assessment Plan

Assessment Timeline

This timeline shows in chronological order the different types of formal and informal assessments that occur during the unit. The table below explains how each assessment is used and who uses it for what purpose.

At a Glance

Grade Level: K-2

Subjects: Language Arts, Science, Health

Topics: Reading, Writing, Classifying

Higher-Order Thinking

Skills: Decision-making, Analysis

Key Learnings:

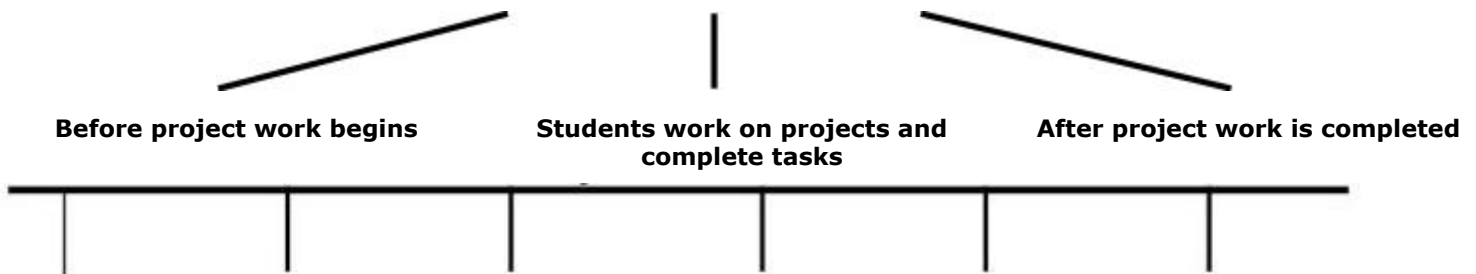
Brainstorming, Organizing, Identifying and Analyzing Information, Fact and Fiction, Justifying Answers, Dangerous Animals, Dentistry

Time Needed: 1.5 hours per day for 5 days

Things You Need

[Instructional Procedures](#)
[Standards](#)

Assessment Timeline



- Questioning
- Journal Checklist
- T-Chart
- Observation Checklist
- Scripting
- Graphic Organizers
- Voting
- Drawing Checklist
- Peer Feedback
- Anecdotal Notes
- Conferences
- Team Assessment
- Probing Questions
- Project Checklist
- Project Scoring Guide
- Self-Assessment

Assessment	Process and Purpose of Assessment
Questioning for Prior Knowledge	The teacher uses questioning to access students' prior knowledge and to monitor their understanding of concepts. Students are encouraged to ask each other questions for clarification and to challenge each others ideas.
Quickwrite Journal Checklist	Students use journals to keep written records of different types of discoveries, reflections or misconceptions, to access prior or current knowledge, and to record questions. The teacher uses the journal checklist to assess students' prior and current knowledge, to address any questions they may have, and to adjust instruction if necessary.
T-Chart	The teacher uses the T-chart to assess students' prior knowledge and to monitor students' ability to make predictions and use clues to make meaning of a story. Students use T-charts to make connections and to compare and contrast information.
Observation Checklist	The teacher uses observations as visual or written snapshots of students' progress. Observations help the teacher check each student's current understanding and level in speaking, listening, writing, reading, identifying visual clues and applying critical analysis. Observations also allow the teacher to see which students are progressing and which students are in need of teaching and reteaching. Oral observation is a major component of a kinderdergarten assessment because students are just learning to express their thoughts and feelings and hone their listening skills.
Scripting	The teacher listens to students and writes exactly what they say on a chart. Scripting allows the teacher to assess students' speaking, listening, and their ability to describe the concepts being taught. At this stage in development students are learning how to put ideas into complete sentences as well as learning how to organize and express their thoughts and feelings. The teacher can provide immediate feedback and support by referring to the script.
Graphic Organizers	The teacher uses graphic organizers to assess if students understand the concept and are able to articulate and justify their answers. Students use graphic organizers as visual representations of their thoughts. They use them to organize and interpret data. A specific graphic organizer used in the unit is the COW diagram: Connection...this reminds me of. Observation...I noticed. Wonder...I wonder.
Voting	The teacher takes a class vote to monitor student thinking and the way they are processing information. This quick informal assessment method provides a "snap shot" of student understanding of key concepts. The teacher can adjust instruction based on the responses students provide. Students use voting to express their thoughts and feeling on a certain situation and to justify their thinking.
Drawing Checklist	The teacher uses the drawing checklist to assess the levels of student understanding; this is especially helpful in assessing emerging writers. The checklist helps in planning future lessons and in re-teaching the concepts if necessary.
Peer Feedback	Students use peer feedback to seek assistance when reviewing each other's work and then justifying their agreement or disagreement with their peers. They learn to share their reasoning and to think about others' problem-solving methods. Kindergarten students can do peer feedback orally. The teacher uses peer feedback to check for understanding and to make instructional decisions. Use the peer feedback forms with the fact and fiction activities .
Anecdotal Notes	The teacher uses this form throughout the unit to capture notes about students as they work. The notes are used to monitor progress, provide feedback, and adjust instruction.
Conferences	The teacher has private conversations with each student to make sure they are learning what they need to, answer any questions students may have, and to assess individual progress at the time. Conferences provide students with the time to ask questions and clarify information.
Team Assessment	Students use the team assessment form to assess their collaboration skills during group work. The teacher uses it for final assessment. Use the job assignment sheet to help guide the group work.
Probing Questions	The teacher uses these questions to probe for higher-level thinking towards the end of the unit. The teacher assesses the student's ability to make connections, think critically, and justify answers with evidence from the story.

Project Checklist	Students use the checklist to help ensure they have met all of the requirements of the project. The teacher uses it during conferences to monitor progress, clarify misunderstandings, and offer feedback.
Project Scoring Guide	The teacher uses the scoring guide to assess the final presentations.
Self-Assessment	Students self-assess to reflect on their learning. The teacher uses these self-assessments to help teach and reinforce metacognitive strategies.

Credits

Vanessa Jones participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for an assessment plan. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

Assessing Projects: Dangerous Animals

Instructional Procedures

Instructional Procedures

Before Reading the Book

1. Discuss why you are reading the book *Doctor DeSoto* by William Steig. "*Last week, I went to the dentist and felt a little nervous, but once I sat down I realized that dentists are helpers. Dentists help people have healthy teeth.*"
2. Access students' background knowledge by asking them comprehension **questions** about dentists.
3. Have students write in their quickwrite journals for five to ten minutes everything they know about dentists. *Modify writing activities based on the writing skills of students at the time of the lesson. Teacher may have to help some kindergarten students write.*
4. Monitor and observe students as they write in their journals using the first two parts of the **quickwrite journal checklist** and make notes of students' knowledge, spelling, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and questions or misconceptions they might have. Clarify questions when students share what they have written in their journals.
5. Show students several items that are found in a dentist office or that a dentist uses and ask students to orally identify them (tongue depressor, floss, toothbrush, and drill). Bring in real items or create a short slideshow and ask students to identify the items on the slides.
6. To set the tone for the story, ask students why they think it is important to go to the dentist. Post all responses on a chart at the front of the room.
7. Show students the cover of the book and have them explain the job of the illustrator, the author, and what the purpose of the dedication page is. Ask students to predict what the book is about by looking at the cover of the book and by looking at the illustrations in the book.
8. Create a class T-chart about what students think the book is about. Use the **observation checklist** to assess students' speaking, listening, and their ability to describe things orally.

After Reading the Book

1. Complete the T-Chart and discuss the differences between students' predictions and what actually happened in the story. Script what students say during the discussion and remember their thoughts during the next activity to help students who need extra support or to prompt students to higher-level thinking.
2. Ask students to complete the Connection-Observation-Wonder (COW) diagram. Connection- *this reminds me of the book I read last week about the crocodile and the alligator or this reminds me of when my little brother went to the dentist and he was afraid.* Observation- *I noticed...when Doctor Desoto* Wonder- *I wonder ...if Doctor Desoto changed his mind about treating dangerous animals.*
3. Review the diagrams and take note of the Wonder questions. Adjust instruction to help students answer as many of these questions as possible during the remainder of the unit.
4. Pose the Essential Question: *How do we know what is real and what is make believe?* Ask students to describe what is real and what is make believe. Prompt them to provide reasons for their ideas. Create a T-chart with their thoughts and then ask them to look for patterns. See if they can verbalize generalizations to answer the Essential Question.
5. Review the concepts of fact and fiction. Ask students to vote on whether they think the book is fact or fiction. Use the **voting questions** to help guide student thinking as they describe what happened in the story.
6. Have students complete the **fact activity** by writing a sentence about a fact that occurred in the book and then drawing a picture that matches the sentence. (*For example: animals can have toothaches, foxes can be red, mice are little*) Use the **drawing checklist** to monitor understanding and provide feedback as necessary.
7. Review the peer **feedback form** for the fact activity with students and make sure they understand how to use it during the next activity. Ask students to exchange their fact activity with another student and decide if they agree or disagree with the other student's sentence and drawing. After agreeing or disagreeing, have students write a sentence explaining why they agree or disagree. (*Modification: Students can do the peer activity orally with a partner.*) Ask students to complete the **fiction activity** and then complete the **peer feedback form** for the fiction activity.
8. Circulate through the room as students work, taking **anecdotal notes**.
9. Ask some students to share their answers and then decide as a class if the book is fact or fiction.
10. Have students reflect in their quickwrite journals to answer the Essential Question: *How do we know what is real and what is make believe?*
11. Monitor, observe, and conference with students that may need help. Use the **conference questions** to help gather information on student understanding.
12. Ask a few students to share their quickwrite journal entries with the class.

Alternative: Set up activities in centers after the initial introduction. Place students in groups of three or four and have them rotate through the centers as needed. Possible activities follow:

- a. Re-read the story
- b. Listen to the story on tape
- c. Read picture books about dentists or books about foxes (*for example, the Gingerbread Man*)
- d. Participate in an interactive activity about teeth on the computer, www.bbc.co.uk/schools/scienceclips/ages/7_8/teeth_eating.shtml* or create a character from the story using Tangrams*, geometric shapes
- e. Complete the Fact and Fiction Activity sheets and participate in giving peer feedback
- f. Dramatize the different roles in the book
- g. Write and draw about the book at a writing center
- h. Participate in an interactive Fact or Opinion online game, www.quia.com/jq/24723.html*

Have students rotate around the centers. Walk around the classroom observing what is happening in each group and taking **anecdotal notes**. Review these at the end of the day and modify instruction as necessary. Note: The activities in these centers require more than 1.5 hours to complete.

Using the Visual Ranking Tool

1. Pose the Unit Question: *What makes an animal dangerous? If you saw a dangerous animal, what is it about that animal that would make you think it was dangerous?*
2. Ask students to brainstorm characteristics of dangerous animals (growling, sharp teeth, barking, biting, long claws, thick fur). Decide as a class which characteristics to include on the chart.
3. Ask students to reflect in their quickwrite journals about *What makes an animal dangerous?*
4. In small groups, have students create a list of dangerous animals. Walk around the classroom observing, monitoring, and questioning students.
5. Have each group share the items on their list and create a class list of about 15 dangerous animals. Eliminate animals from the list that do not fit the class generated criteria of *what makes an animal dangerous*.
6. As items are eliminated, have students justify their thoughts and ask the class as a whole to agree or disagree on whether to take the animal off of the list. *This can take a long time with Kindergartners to decide which animal to eliminate. Teacher may have students vote on whether to take off or leave an animal on a list once they get the list down to 10 items. The goal is to get only 5 dangerous animals on the class generated list.*
7. Place students in groups of two or three and have them use the *Visual Ranking Tool* to rank the animals from most to least dangerous (tigers, bears, alligators, elephants, bunny). Hand out the **job assignment** sheet and the **team assessment**. Review with students to make sure they understand what they are supposed to do.
8. Have students compare their ranking with others in the class and discuss the results as a class.
9. Then ask students to reflect on their collaborations skills by completing the **team assessment**.
10. Finally, ask students to reflect in their quickwrite journals: *What do you think is the most dangerous animal in the world?*
11. Monitor, observe, and conference with students who may need help. Use the **conference questions** to help gather information on student understanding.

Justifying and Presenting Opinions

1. Pose the Unit Question: *If you were Doctor DeSoto, would you treat the fox?* Ask students to explain whether they would treat the fox and to provide their reasoning. Encourage students to use examples from the story or other books and script what they say on a chart. Use the **probing questions for justification** to prompt for higher-level thinking.
2. As a culminating project, have students write at least two sentences that state their thoughts and the evidence to support them concerning whether the DeSotos were justified or not. Ask students to also draw a picture to illustrate their conclusions. Provide the **project checklist** and review with students so they know all the elements to include in their project. Have students orally present their projects and assess them using the **project scoring guide**. After students have presented, ask them to **self-assess** their project.

Assessing Projects: Dangerous Animals

Content Standards and Objectives

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Texas Content Standards

Science Standards

- construct reasonable explanations
- make decisions using information
- discuss and justify the merits of decisions
- explain a problem in his/her own words and propose a solution
- describe properties of objects and characteristics of organisms

Language Arts Standards

- listen critically to interpret and evaluate
- connect experiences and ideas with those of others through speaking and listening
- ask and answer relevant questions and make contributions in small or large group discussions
- clarify and support spoken messages using appropriate props such as objects, pictures, or charts
- retell a spoken message by summarizing or clarifying
- use prior knowledge to anticipate meaning and make sense of texts
- describe how illustrations contribute to the text
- distinguish fiction from nonfiction, including fact and fantasy
- identify relevant questions for inquiry
- draw conclusions from information gathered
- write to record ideas and reflections
- use available technology to compose text
- record or dictate questions for investigating

Health

- name people who can provide helpful health information such as parents, doctors, teachers, and nurses

Student Objectives

Student will be able to:

- Gather, analyze, organize, reflect, and process information in a variety of ways
- Retell a story in sequential order
- Distinguish between fact and fiction
- Work cooperatively in small groups to identify dangerous animals and determine characteristics of dangerous animals
- Make predictions and connections to other stories they have read
- Access prior knowledge and relate it to new information they are learning both inside and outside of school
- Write sentences and draw illustrations to show comprehension of information
- Make reasonable decisions as individuals and as a class



Questions to Assess Students' Background Knowledge about Dentists

Have students raise their hands if they can answer the questions orally.

1. Have you ever been to the dentist before?
2. Have you ever had a toothache before?
3. What happens if you do not brush your teeth?
4. What happens when your teeth really get dirty?
5. Have you ever had your teeth cleaned?
6. Are teeth always white?
7. What happens if you eat too much candy?
8. Has anyone in your family ever been to the dentist before?
9. What is the job of the dentist?
10. Who can name the different types of instruments that a dentist uses?
11. Have you ever lost a tooth? What happened?
12. Have you ever gone to the dentist and had a tooth pulled? What happened?



Quickwrite Journal Checklist:

Background Knowledge		Yes	No	Comments
	Does student know about the subject?			
	Can student give examples?			
	Can student make personal connections?			
	Can student express thoughts in complete sentences?			
Grammar/Punctuation /Spelling				
	Is student using punctuation correctly? (periods, question marks, exclamation marks)			
	Is student writing complete sentences?			
	Is student writing legibly and using appropriate spacing?			
	Is student using correct letter formation when he/she writes (top to bottom)?			
	Is student capitalizing letters?			
	Is student using inventive spelling when writing and spelling most commonly used words?			
	Does student writing make sense?			
	Does student stay on topic?			
Processing Information				
	Is student learning new concepts?			
	Can student apply those new concepts to prior			

	knowledge?			
	Can student give examples of things they have learned?			
	Can student give examples from the story or other stories that they have read?			
	Can student tell how the story is like other stories?			

STUDENT OBSERVATION CHECKLIST



Listening	All of the time	Most of the time	Never	Teacher Notes
Student looks at the person who is speaking.				
Student waits turn before speaking.				
Student raises hand.				
Student does not interrupt others.				
Speaking				
Student uses complete sentences.				
Student expresses ideas clearly.				
Student uses the correct vocabulary.				
Student makes connections to personal experiences.				
Student makes eye contact with everyone.				
Explaining				
Student can explain thinking.				
Student can describe things.				
Student relates to own personal experience.				
Student understands content.				
Student can answer questions in detail.				

Voting Questions

Use these questions to help guide the voting activity.

Who are the characters in the story?	Are the characters real? Why or Why not?
What did the characters do that tells you that the story is real or not real?	What could be real in the story? Give examples.
Do animals have toothaches?	Could an animal having a toothache be real in the story?
Where do animals go when they have toothaches?	What types of animals can go to the doctor for their teeth or toothache?
Do animals in the wild go to the dentist?	What do animals in the wild do when they have a toothache?
Can mice be dentists?	Do dentists use ladders to work in their patients' mouths?
What happens if a gorilla has a toothache?	Do dentists climb inside their patients' mouths?

Drawing Checklist



Students use drawing to visually show and express their thinking, observations, and to justify their answers. Teachers use drawing to help interpret the writings or thoughts of students and to assess the levels of their understanding. This helps in planning future lessons and in re-teaching the concept if necessary.





	All of the time	Most of the time	Never	Teacher Notes
Student is able to explain drawings.				
Drawing stays focused.				
Drawing is detailed.				
Drawing serves as a trigger to extend to other ideas or scaffolding.				

Name: _____

Non-Fiction: Facts: True Peer Review

Color the 😊 **blue** if you **agree** with your partner's sentence and picture.

Color the 😞 **red** if you **disagree** with your partner's sentence and picture.

Do you agree with your partner's sentence?	YES 	NO 		
Do you agree with your partner's picture?	YES 	NO 		

What made the sentence a fact?





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Name: _____

Fiction- Not True Peer Review

Color the 😊 **blue** if you **agree** with your partner's sentence and picture.

Color the 😞 **red** if you **disagree** with your partner's sentence and picture.

Do you agree with your partner's sentence?	YES 	NO 		
Do you agree with your partner's picture?	YES 	NO 		

What made the sentence fiction: not true?

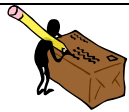
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Name: _____

Doctor DeSoto Activity Sheet

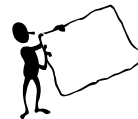


FACT – TRUE



1. Write a sentence about something that could be true in the story.

2. Draw a picture to match your sentence.

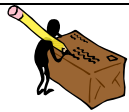


Name: _____

Doctor DeSoto Activity Sheet

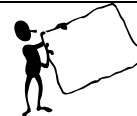


Fiction – NOT TRUE



1. Write a sentence about something that could not be true in the story.

2. Draw a picture to match your sentence.



Anecdotal Notes

Story			
Questions	Most of the time	Some of the time	Needs Improvement: Notes
Does student understand story elements? (problems, solution, characters, setting)			
Does student understand FACT?			
Does student understand FICTION?			
Can student identify the beginning, middle and end of the story?			
Does student know the characters?			
Does student refer to the characters by name?			
Can student find evidence in the story to support the answer for fact or fiction?			
Can student retell story in sequential order?			
Can student give examples from other stories?			
Can student speak and express ideas?			
Does the student use complete sentences?			
Does the student use correct words?			
Can the student			

respond appropriately to questions?			
Can the student justify answers?			
Can student relate a personal experience to the story?			
Can student make story connections?			
Can student give examples from the story?			
Can student determine characteristics of dangerous animals?			
Collaboration			
Questions	Most of the time	Some of the time	Needs Improvement: Notes
Does student understand what needs to be done?			
Does student listen to other team members?			
Does student share ideas?			
Does student participate?			
Does student use prior knowledge in making decisions?			
Does student work well in a group setting?			
Does student use personal examples?			

Reflection

Questions	Most of the time	Some of the time	Needs Improvement: Notes
Can student express what he or she has learned in this unit?			
Is student able to make decisions and justify decisions?			
Is the student still wondering about things?			
Is the student meeting teacher learning objectives for this unit?			

Student: _____

Conference Questions

Story		
Prompt Questions:	Student Answer	Teacher Notes:
Is this story real or make believe?		
How do you know?		
Who are the main characters?		
What is fox's problem?		
Does fox's problem create other problems in the story?		
How is the problem solved?		
What happens at the end of the story?		
Are any of the characters like anyone you know?		
Does the fox know he is dangerous?		
Would you treat the fox, if you were Doctor Desoto? Why or why not?		
What can Doctor DeSoto do to prevent the fox from returning for treatment?		
How would your plan be different		

from Doctor Desoto's?		
How does Doctor DeSoto overcome his problem?		
Do you think DeSoto's plan to glue the fox's mouth was the right choice? Why or why not?		
If you were the fox, what would you say to convince Doctor DeSoto to keep him as his patient?		
Should the DeSotos begin treating other dangerous animals?		


Dangerous Animals


Prompt Questions:	Student Answer	Teacher Notes:
If you saw a dangerous animal, what is it about that animal that would make you think it was dangerous?		
What is an example of a dangerous animal?		
Have you ever seen a dangerous animal up close?		
How did it make you feel? Why?		
Have you ever been in a dangerous situation with a dangerous animal?		
What do you think is the most dangerous animal in the world?		
What makes this		


animal dangerous?		
What are the characteristics of your dangerous animal on our dangerous animals criteria chart?		
Why is this animal more dangerous than _____?		
Reflection		
Prompt Questions:	Student Answer	Teacher Notes:
What questions do you still have?		
What have you learned during this unit?		
How can reading this book help you in your personal life?		
What other story or book does this story remind you of? Why?		
What was your favorite part of the story? Least favorite?		




Names: _____

Team Collaboration

Draw a  if you discussed, decided, voted and agreed on each item as a team **ALL** of the time.

Draw a  if you discussed, decided, voted and agreed as a team **MOST** of the time.

Draw a  if you **NEVER** discussed, decided, voted or agreed as a team.

Skills	What we did	All of the time	Most of the time	Never
				
Discussing	We discussed the content together as a team and each person justified their responses.			
Deciding	We made all decisions together.			
Voting	We voted on each decision.			
Agreeing	We agreed on the vote.			
Listening	We listened to each other.			
Sharing Ideas	We shared ideas with each other.			
Working Together	We worked together as a team.			
Problem Solving	We solved our problems together.			
Focusing	We stayed on task.			
Encouraging	We encouraged each other.			
Justifying	We justified our answers with examples.			

Job Assignments

Before you make your decision, do the following:

Discuss

Justify

Vote

Agree

Decide

Teacher assigns each team member a job.

	Job Name	Job Task	In charge of:
DISCUSS	Questioner	Asks the questions	Discusses the information
VOTE	Recorder	Takes the vote	Records the vote so a decision can be made
AGREE	Task Manager	Makes sure everyone agrees	Makes sure a consensus is reached
DECIDE	Decision	Decides on an answer	Makes sure a decision is made

Probing Questions



Use these questions to help elicit answers from students so that they may justify their answers.

If you were Doctor DeSoto, would you treat the fox? Why or why not?

- What could you do differently to assure yourself that the fox would not harm you and your family?
- Give me an example from another book that you have read or your own personal experience to justify your answer.
- What changes would you have made in treating the fox?
- Would the fox's appearance affect your decision to treat him?
- What would your criteria for treating dangerous animals be?
- How can you tell if someone is a safe person (stranger/danger)?
- Do you think that dressing nicely was part of fox's plan?
- Would you treat other large animals? Why or why not?
- Under what circumstances would you treat other large animals?
- Would you ever treat a tiger or elephant even if it was an emergency?
- Would it matter if the animal was a baby animal?
- What lesson is learned from this story?



Project Checklist



TASK	Completed? Yes	Completed? NO
I wrote my name of my project.		
I wrote at least two sentences that explained if I think the DeSotos were justified in not treating the fox.		
In my sentences, I gave evidence from the book or a personal experience.		
I drew a picture to illustrate my sentences.		
I practiced what I was going to say to the class.		


Project Scoring Guide

Content	3 Excellent	2 Good	1 Needs Improvement	Notes
Student clearly concludes whether the DeSotos were justified or not.				
Student connects information to personal experiences.				
Student provides evidence from other stories or personal life to justify answers.				
Drawing				
Student includes a drawing.				
Drawing is detailed and focuses on what is in the sentences.				
Speaking				
Student speaks clearly and slowly.				
Student presents with confidence.				
Student uses correct vocabulary.				
Student explains significance of drawing.				
Student answers questions.				
Writing				
Student writes complete sentences.				
Student includes at least two sentences.				
Student uses invented spelling.				

Name: _____

Final Project: Self-Assessment



	EXCELLENT 	GOOD 	I COULD DO BETTER 
I drew a picture to match my sentences.			
I wrote at least two sentences.			
I provided evidence from the story or my own personal experience.			
I wrote my name of my project.			
I practiced my presentation before I did it.			
I presented my project to my class.			
I spoke clearly while presenting.			
I listened when others were speaking.			
I answered questions.			