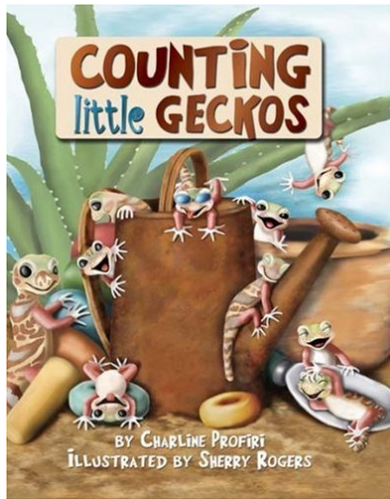


COUNTING LITTLE GECKOS



By Charline Profiri

***Note:** Children's readiness levels vary greatly and these 50 Language Arts, Math, Science/Geography, Art, Music and Enrichment Activities vary in difficulty. Some are easily done at home, others are more suitable for use in a school setting. You are the best judge of which activities are appropriate and would appeal to your child/children. Enjoy!*

Language Arts Activities

- Recite the nursery rhyme: 1, 2 buckle my shoe; 3, 4 shut the door; 5, 6 pick up sticks; 7, 8 lay them straight; 9, 10 a big fat hen. Now read the copycat rhyme at the end of *Counting Little Geckos*.
- Encourage children to create a finger play for the story. For example, for the first verse: "Look!" (Hand above eyes as though searching.) "A gecko having fun. Rain..." (Fingers of both hands flutter down like rain.) "won't stop..." (Hold hand up to signal stop.) "this little one." (Hold up one finger.)

- After several readings, have children supply the missing word at the end of each line of the rhyme. Older children can do a choral reading of the book. Have children stand when they hear a word that rhymes.
- Teach children other counting rhymes. For example: 1, 2, 3, 4 Mary's at the cottage door. 5, 6, 7, 8 Eating cherries off a plate.
- Ask children to describe the sequence of events in the story or predict the end. "What happened first?" "What happened next?" "What happened at the end of the story?"
- Make flash cards for the number words two through ten with dots representing the number on each card. Add a number word card to the sentence: *I see _____ geckos.* Ask children to read the sentence.
- Ask "What letter does gecko start with?" Look for upper and lower case G/g in the book.
- Practice writing upper and lower case 'G/g' in the air and on paper.
- Ask children, "Can you think of another word that would rhyme with the rhyming words on this page?" Ask, "Does _____ sound like _____ and _____?" If yes, put that word on a flash card and add it to the rhyme family. (A pocket chart is helpful for this activity.)
- Ask children, "Which is your favorite illustration? Tell why."
- Read other books about geckos.
 - Baby Geckos Colors, Neecey Twinem [Baby-Preschool]*
 - The Goodnight Gecko, Gill McBarnet [Ages 4-8]*
 - Gecko Hide and Seek, Gill McBarnet [Ages 4-8]*
 - The Legend of the Laughing Gecko, Bruce Hale [Ages 4-8]*
 - Geckos Complaint, A Balinese Folktale, Ann Martin Bowler [Ages 4-8]*

Math Activities

- Have children point to and count the geckos on each page.
- Ask children to count their toes. Then have them count to learn how many toes a gecko has.
- Draw a picture of 10 things. Or make a cooperative big book. Ask small groups to create a page for a certain number, staple the pages together and present to the class. Keep the book in the reading center for future use.
- Ask children to count how many times they see the words gecko and geckos. Make a graph to record the answers.

- Count each little gecko's freckles. With the exceptions of the first gecko and mom gecko, the other geckos have the same number of freckles on each side of their face as the number when they were first introduced. Help children make this discovery.
- Ask children to guess/estimate the total number of geckos pictured in the book (95). Check their estimate by counting and making pretzel stick piles to represent the number of geckos on each page. Then count the total number of pretzels. Enjoy eating pretzels for a snack.
- Use manipulatives to discover different combinations that equal ten.
- Count the number of children in the class. Ask one child to stand up and another to stand next to him. Have the children say, "1 plus 1 is 2." Ask another child to join them. Lead children in saying, "2 plus 1 is three."...and so on until all the children have been counted.
- Practice writing the numerals one through 10 in the air and on paper.
- Show children two book pages for comparing the number of geckos. For example, the page that shows 5 geckos, and the page with 8 geckos. Ask "Which page had more geckos?" "Which page had fewer geckos?" or "Did both pages have the same number of geckos?"
- Show children a numeral or a number word. Ask them to count out that many items.
- Reinforce position words by asking children to, "Point to the gecko on top of the page, in the center, on the bottom."
- Google "activities on Numbers and Counting Through Ten."
- Read other books that help teach math concepts:
 - Ten Black Dots*, Donald Crews [Baby-Preschool]
 - Way Out in the Desert*, T. J. Marsh and Jennifer Ward [Baby-Preschool]
 - Moja Means One, Swahili Counting Book*, Muriel L. Feelings [Ages 4-8]
 - Counting Arizona's Treasures*, Terri Fields [Baby-Preschool]

Science/ Geography Activities

AZ Science 1997 Academic Standards Foundations (Grades 1-3)

4 Life Science

4SC-F3 Identify the basic structures and functions of plants and animals

- PO 1 Identify basic animal structures
 - PO 2 Describe the functions of basic animal structures
- 4SC-F4 Identify characteristics of plants and animals (including extinct organisms) that allow them to live in specific environments
- PO 2 Identify adaptations of animals that allow them to live in specific environment
- *Counting Little Geckos* shows several gecko actions. Ask, "Are those things you do too? Show me." shows several gecko actions. Ask, "Are those things you do too? Show me."
- Ask, "How are you like a gecko?" "How are you different?"
- Learn about geckos. Where do they live? What do they eat? Are they nocturnal or diurnal? Who/what are their natural enemies? How can they walk upside down? (A scientific explanation and a remarkable picture of the tiny hairs on the bottom of gecko feet can be seen at: http://www.sciencentral.com/articles/view.php?language=english&type=&article_id=218391131) Websites: http://www.desertmuseum.org/books/nhsd_cloconyx.html and <http://www.phoenixzoo.org/zoo/animals/facts/geckoban.asp>
- Book: *Geckos*, W. P. Mara [ages 9-12] Good photos and information..
- Compare different types of lizards. This book is based on Western Banded Geckos. Look at different gecko pictures on the Tucson Herpetological Society website <http://www.arts.arizona.edu/herp/COVA.html> for comparison.
- Learn how a lizard can shed its tail and grow a new one. See [Gecko Facts](#).
Books: *Lizards Weird and Wonderful*, Margery Flacklam [ages 4-8]
Lizards, Joanne Mattern [ages 4-8]
Lizards, David Badger [adult] Excellent large close-up photos.
- Learn about other desert animals.
Website: www.southwestwildlife.org/factsheets/
Video: *Desert Animals*, Dorling Kindersley [ages 2 and up].
Books: *Look Who Lives in the Desert!*, Brooke Bessen [ages 3-9]
Lizards for Lunch: A Roadrunner's Tale, Conrad Stora [ages 4-8]
Bugs for Lunch, Margery Flackham [ages 4-8]
- Do geckos live where you live? Locate geckos habitats on a map.
Website: www.enchantedlearning.com/biomes/
- What animals live in these other habitats: grasslands, ocean, jungle?
Website: www.enchantedlearning.com/biomes/

Art Activities

- Shape geckos from clay or play dough.
- Paint a gecko in a desert scene or glue a cut out gecko to a painted desert scene.
- Trace around a wooden ice-cream spoon to make a gecko body. Add legs, feet and a tail. Color. Glue on wiggle eyes. Optional: Cut out to use as a bookmark.
- Make a gecko puppet. To make a stick puppet: draw, color and cut out a gecko and glue it to a popsicle stick. Or make a paper bag puppet. If this is a group project, use the puppets to act out the book, with an adult or older child narrator.
- Make a thick mixture of sand from the sandbox, paint and glue. Give children a gecko shape cut from tag board and a stiff brush. Tell them to paint/dab the mixture onto the gecko. Let dry overnight. The next day, add large plastic jewels or wiggle eyes.
- Ask children to predict what happened after Mom gecko appeared and create a picture to go with their prediction.
- Download, print and color a Gecko coloring page

Music Activities

- Make weather sounds with your hands: Small rain drops--one finger claps or taps on floor or table; heavy rain--four finger claps or taps; wind--rub hands together in a circular motion.
- Ask children to try to click their tongue against the roof of their mouth to make a clicking noise like geckos make, which sounds like "geck-o."
- Play the cassette tape that comes with *Patty Horn's Desert Dwellers Fiesta* song & lyrics kit to learn songs about lizards, snakes, tortoises, quail, and pack rats.
- Make rain sticks to use when you read the book and for other music/rhythm activities. Website instructions:
www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml or www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/music/rainstick/ (without pins or nails)

Enrichment Activities

- Invite a herpetologist to your classroom to tell about his job.
- One little gecko wears sunglasses. Invite an ophthalmologist or optometrist to your class to explain how sunglasses protect eyes.
- Ask children to research another desert animal or a different type of lizard or reptile and tell the class about it.
- Visit a pet store that sells geckos or ask store personnel to bring one to your classroom. Ask them how to care for geckos.
- Take a field trip to the zoo or [Desert Museum](#) to look at the reptile exhibits