

PRAIRIE FUN!

Lesson By: Whitney Bowman

Grade Level: Second

Focus: This lesson plan will cover prairie habitat, animals and insects that live within the prairie, and how those animals survive in the prairie.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify a prairie habitat and it is different than other habitats.
2. Students will be able to discuss the differences in the animals and plants that live in the prairie.
3. Students will be able to discuss how plants and animals find food, shelter and water within in a prairie habitat.

Standards:

SC 2.4.1 2000

Observe and identify different external features of plants and animals and describe how these features help them live in different environments.

SC 2.4.2 2000

Observe that and describe how animals may use plants, or even other animals, for shelter and nesting.

SC 2.4.3 2000

Observe and explain that plants and animals both need to take in water, animals need to take in food, and plants need light.

SC 2.4.4 2000

Recognize and explain that living things are found almost everywhere in the world and that there are somewhat different kinds in different places.

SC 2.4.5 2000

Recognize and explain that materials in nature, such as grass, twigs, sticks, and leaves, can be recycled and used again, sometimes in different forms, such as in birds' nests.

Background:

See Cheat Sheet at bottom

Materials:

1. Nets
2. Butterfly Nets
3. Bug jars
4. Bug Bingo Cards (<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Archives/2011/Play-Bug-Bingo.aspx>)
5. Markers

Procedure: (55 Minutes Total)

Part 1 [35 Minutes]

1. Describe what a prairie habitat is and what plants and animals live in the prairie, as well as the adaptations that allow them to live in this environment. Field guides, be provided by Camp Adventure, are suggested for correct identification for prairie plants, insects, mammals and reptiles.
2. Explain how the animals in this habitat are different from other habitats such as birds that nest in wooded areas, owls, hawks etc.
3. Allow the students to catch bugs with nets in the prairie. This is to allow them to practice catching bugs in their nets before playing bug bingo. Then observe and discuss what insects they caught and release the insects. They can also look for bugs on the ground.

Part 2 [20 Minutes]

4. Set up “bug bingo” and allow the children to catch the insects indicated on the game poster. Make sure that each student has their own “bug bingo” sheet.
5. Put a place marker on the insects found. (Do not put bugs on bingo card)
6. When the children find a bug they should match it with a bug on the bingo card according to similarities such as, wings many legs or colors. They DO NOT have to be the same insect.
7. Ask questions that allow them to find similarities on the bingo card like if it has wings, how many legs, its color, and what does the bug use to defend itself.
8. Discuss how the bugs found on the bug bingo card use the prairie as their home, such as food, water and shelter.

Evaluation:

1. Observe the students during the activities to make sure they are actively searching for a bug.
2. At the end make each student pick a favorite bug and write a journal-entry describing its features, where it could live, what it eats or drinks, etc.

Prairie Cheat Sheet

Prairies come in different forms such as short grass and tall grass. Indiana has tall grass prairies, that grow in across Indiana.

Plants

Wild Flowers

Purple Cone flower

Provides habitat, food, protection

Black Eyed Susan

Provides habitat, food, protection

Grasses

Big Blue Stem

Provides habitat, food, protection

Fox Tail

Provides habitat, food, protection

Clovers

Purple Clover

Provides habitat, food, protection

White Clover

Provides habitat, food, protection

Insects

Flying

Dragon Flies

Natural predators, pollinators & food source

Use the prairie for shelter and food (other insects)

Butter Flies

Food source and pollinators

Use the prairie for shelter and food (nectar from plants)

Lots O' Legs

Caterpillars

Food Source (for other insects and animals)

Use the prairie for habitat and metamorphosis (into moths or

butterflies).

Millipedes

Food source (for other insects and animals) and detritivore (breaks down plant matter into dirt)

Beetles

Lady Bugs

Food source (for other insects and animals) and detritivore (breaks down plant matter into dirt)

Black Blister Beetle

Food source (for other insects and animals) and detritivore (breaks down plant matter into dirt)

Stink Bug

Food source (for other insects and animals) and detritivore (breaks down plant matter into dirt)

Mammals

Rabbits

Food source for larger predators
Use prairie for habitat and food

Ground Hogs

Food source for larger predators
Use prairie for habitat and food

Mice

Food source for larger predators
Use prairie for habitat and food

Reptiles

Box Turtles

Food source for birds of prey
Use Prairie for habitat and food

Brown Snakes

Food source for predators
Use Prairie for habitat and food

Garter Snakes

Food source for predators
Use prairie for habitat

Birds

Red Winged Black Bird

Uses prairie to find mates, nesting material and food (insects)

Hawks

Use prairie to find food, other birds and small mammals.