

Animals In Their Habitat

Grades: 1 and 2

Length: 50 minutes

South Dakota Content Standards

- ◆ 1st Grade Life Science: Students will describe life needs of animals, including people (food, water, shelter, air).
- ◆ 1st Grade Life Science: Students will describe a variety of habitats.

- ◆ 2nd Grade Life Science: Students will compare plants and animals in their immediate surroundings with those in other habitats.
- ◆ 2nd Grade Life Science: Students will describe similarities and differences of animals.

Primary Theme

Studying and restoring the mixed grass prairie ecosystem and humans' relationship to it will help us understand the changing grassland ecology of the Midwest, and ensure the protection of this fragile and remarkably diverse ecosystem.

Objectives

Define the components that make up a habitat (food, water, shelter, and space).

List some plants and animals that live on the mixed-grass prairie of South Dakota and some that do not.

Point out common animal characteristics that make them able to live in a prairie habitat (i.e. thick fur, camouflage, etc.)

Materials

- ◆ Prairie Poster
- ◆ Animal Postcards
- ◆ Animal Clues
- ◆ Animal Pictures
- ◆ Slide show
- ◆ "Habitat Relay" game

Procedure

- 1.** Ask students, “What do people need to survive?” Write the list on the board.
- 2.** When the words food, shelter, space, and water come up, circle these words. Lead them to these terms if they do not volunteer them.
- 3.** Discuss and list on the board what pets need to survive. Circle the words food, shelter, space, and water when they say them again.
- 4.** Discuss and list on the board what wildlife (animals that live on their own in nature) need to survive. Circle the words food, shelter, space, and water when they say them again.
- 5.** Point out that all living animals need food, water, shelter, and space. That is called a habitat. Habitat is food, water, shelter, and space that a plant or animal needs to survive.
- 6.** Have the students stand up and perform hand motions for each key word: hand over the stomach for food, hand over the mouth for water, hands over the head for shelter, and hands spread out for space.
- 7.** Display the prairie poster. Focus the discussion on the prairie found with the park and seen in the poster. Talk about the importance of food, water, shelter, and space.
- 8.** Using the animal cards, give clues about certain animals and see if the students can guess the correct animal. After the animal is guessed correctly, place the animal card on the prairie poster with velcro.
- 9.** Alternative: Use the animal sounds from the CD as the clues. Use furs, antlers, horns, etc. for the students to handle.
- 10.** When they have mastered this game, change the rules a little. Tell them you are going to show them a picture of an animal and they have to tell you if it lives on the prairie or not. If the animal doesn’t live on the prairie, then ask where the animal does live.

Habitat Relay

1. Explain the rules of the game.
2. Line the students up. Give each student a picture of an animal. Place one of each box at the head of the line and a large stack of animal pictures.
3. One at a time, the students will pick up the next animal picture and decide whether or not it lives in the prairie, place in into the appropriate box, then proceed to the end of the line.
4. At the conclusion of the activity draw a few animals out of the boxes and ask the students as a group whether it lives in the prairie habitat or not. Then, ask for reasons why it lives in the prairie or not.
5. Review the habitat. Many children like to chant: Food, Water, Shelter, Space, a Habitat, a Habitat!

Badlands National Park is a place where these animals can find a habitat to live in. Please visit Badlands National Park and the wonderful prairie habitat! You can also visit Badlands National Park virtually via the *Views of the National Parks* program.

Resources

Coffield, Tom. The Badlands Coloring Book. Chicken House Press, 1996. ISBN 0-9646577-1-6.

Project WILD activity guide book. www.projectwild.org.

Wallace, Marriane D. America's Prairies and Grasslands: guide to plants and animals. Fulcrum Publishing, 2001. ISBN 1-55591-992-8.

Views of the National Parks - www2.nature.nps.gov/views
Virtual experiences of national parks and knowledge centers on various natural resource themes.