

Classroom Activities for Wildlife Books

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Use these cross-curricular activities to accompany books in the Kids Can Press Wildlife series and the Who Lives Here? series, written by Deborah Hodge.

Language Arts

- Have children write a poem about a wild animal. Try a cinquain (a five-line poem).

- Animal's name (one word)
- Two verbs describing how it moves
- Three adjectives describing how it looks
- A four word phrase about the animal
- Another word for the animal

Cougar

Stalking, hiding

Strong, silent, golden

Gliding through the trees

Wildcat

- Brainstorm words and phrases about a wild animal — bears, for instance. Use adjectives (huge, furry, fierce), verbs (plod, charge, snort) and settings (through the forest, on the ice, up a tree). Write and illustrate sentences or poems combining these words. For example, "Huge, furry grizzly bears plod through the forest."

- Research a wild animal and present the information in a booklet cut out in the shape of the animal. Describe the animal's appearance, home, food, babies and habits. Draw pictures to illustrate the information. (See more detailed instructions at the end of this document.)

Science

Construct a food chain mobile: Draw and cut out pictures of an animal and what it eats. Glue the pictures onto stiff cardboard and suspend them on strings from a coat hanger or twigs.

Lifecycle Timeline: Construct an illustrated time-line showing the stages in a wild animal's life — from newborn, to young animal, to adult.

Fur Fun: Experiment with the insulating properties of fur. Compare two jars filled with warm water — one jar covered with cotton batting or fake fur, the other one bare. Measure the water temperature after 15 minutes. Which jar retains heat best? Discuss how an animal's fur helps it stay warm.

Animal Watch: Go on a nature walk in your area and count how many animals and birds you see. Can you identify them all?

Wildlife talk: Invite a park ranger or wildlife expert into the classroom to talk about wild animals, birds or fish in your area. Ask about research programs that involve tagging and tracking animals.

Field trips: Go on a field trip to see wild animals. Try visiting: a salmon hatchery or spawning stream; a river where eagles gather; a pond where beavers live; and so on.

Geography

- On a wall map of Canada, point out the areas where various wild animals live. Cut out construction paper animals and pin them onto the map in the appropriate areas.
- Bald eagles, whales and caribou are migratory animals. Discuss what this means and why the animals must move. Trace out their migratory routes.

Art

Diorama: Create a 3-D scene of a wild animal's habitat inside a shoebox. Design a setting on the sides of the box. Add animals and trees cut from cardboard or sculpted from modeling clay. Make water or ice by gluing foil onto the bottom of the box. Make snow by sprinkling salt on top of the glue.

Mural: Paint a mural of a group of wild animals in their habitat. Glue on twigs or grasses for a realistic effect.

Crayon Resist Painting: Make an underwater ocean picture using a crayon-resist technique: draw whales or salmon and other forms of ocean life with wax crayons, then paint over top with a light blue watercolour wash.

Camouflage Picture: Draw or paint a picture showing a wild animal hiding in its habitat. Glue on glitter to make glowing eyes.

Modelling: Use modelling clay to form miniature wild animal sculptures. Or, mould life-size models of claws, teeth or paws.

Masks: Make paper-plate wolf masks. Glue on a cardboard tube paper snout and construction paper eyes, ears and nostrils. Wear the masks and role-play a day in the life of a wolf pack.

Physical Education/Drama (for younger students)

- Choose a wild animal, a fox for instance. Ask children to describe how a fox moves. They may suggest leaping, running or pouncing. Write the suggestions on cards. Choose another animal and repeat the procedure. Once you have a set of verbs (action words), go to the gym or playing field. Announce one of the animal movements and have the children act it out. Repeat with other verbs.

- Mime wild cat movements — crouching, hiding, stalking, pouncing and leaping. Role-play a wild cat climbing a tree, waking up from a sleep, chasing prey and caring for kittens.

Math (for younger students)

• **Make a list:** Choose ten wild animals: bald eagle, black bear, moose and so on. Give each child a sheet of paper divided into two columns: heavier than me, lighter than me. Ask each child to list his/her weight at the top of page. Next, ask the child to place each animal under the appropriate heading, by estimating. Check their estimates using the wildlife series.

Make a chart: Compare the physical features of different species in a wild animal family. Include body size, weight, colouring, length or shape of claws, type of teeth. and so on.

Your Ideas

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Wildlife Research Project

The Kids Can Press Wildlife Series is ideal for helping young readers do their first research projects.

Here's how to get them started:

- Have each child select an animal, bird or fish to research.
- Give your students the wildlife books and the research guide that follows to help them focus their study. Have them make rough notes for each topic (Appearance, Home, Food and so on.)
- Once the research is done, have your students present their findings in an illustrated booklet.

Making the Booklet:

- Cut 6 booklet sized pages for each student.
- Use one page for each topic in the Research Guide (Appearance, Food, Babies and so on). On each page, have the student write a short paragraph about the topic and create an illustration to accompany it.
- When all six pages are finished, make a cover page from thick paper. On the cover page, ask the child to include a title, a cover illustration, and his or her own name as author and illustrator. Put the pages in order, with the cover on top, and staple them together.
- Invite the children to read their animal booklets to the class.

RESEARCH GUIDE

Appearance

What does your animal look like? How much does it weigh?

Home

Where does your animal live? What kind of home does it have?

Food

What does your animal eat?

Babies

How many babies does your animal have? Where are they born?

Enemies

Who are enemies of your animal? How does it protect itself?

Habits

What are some interesting facts about your animal?

