

Prairie Mural

Grades: 1 and 2

Length: 30 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.

Background

During the "Animals In Their Habitat" lesson students identified many animals that live in the prairie habitat. This follow-up activity will reinforce the concept that "the prairie is a home for many special plants and animals". Additionally, by creating a prairie mural, students will begin to explore the relationships among the various organisms within a habitat.

Materials

- ◆ Paper

- ◆ Pencils

- ◆ Crayons

- ◆ Books about the prairie

- ◆ Bulletin board space

Procedure

1. On a classroom bulletin board, post a title that reads “The South Dakota Prairie”.
2. Have the students list some of the plants and animals that live on the prairie. Encourage them to choose diverse species. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, grasses, flowers, and trees all find homes on the prairie.
3. Hand out materials. Have each student cut their paper in half. On one piece draw and color a prairie plant. On the other piece draw and color a prairie animal. All of the pictures will be combined to create a prairie mural.
4. Have students add their pictures to the bulletin board. Allow some students to tell the class about their pictures.
5. Remind the students that all of these animals live on the prairie. They find food and shelter on the prairie to survive. Introduce food webs by asking “What does a coyote eat?” and the pointing to an animal a coyote might eat. Add more questions.

Extension

Leave your prairie mural posted in the classroom. Over the next few days, continue to ask questions about the mural and point out different relationships. By completing this lesson, students will begin to see the prairie as a community of interdependent plants and animals.

Additional Information

National Park Service - www.nps.gov

Information on all of America’s National Parks. Includes a special section for students and teachers.

Views of the National Parks - www2.nature.nps.gov/views

Virtual experiences of national parks and knowledge centers on various natural resource themes.

National Park Service Web Rangers - www.nps.gov/webrangers

Kids can become Junior Rangers from their home or school.