

Who Am I and Where Do I Live?



Introduction

In "The Prairie that Nature Built", the readers are introduced to the many different levels of activity in a prairie: under ground, in the grasses, on top of the grasses, in the sky. They were introduced to micro-organisms; small insects, worms, spiders, and other small creatures; then animals, birds, and reptiles that tunnel or live in tunnels and burrows; then small animals, insects, and birds that live in the grasses; grazers that tromp upon and eat the grasses; predators that eat the animals; and finally those insects and birds that fly.

Materials Needed

- ◆ A Copy of the Book
- ◆ Roll of Newsprint Paper and art supplies
- ◆ Index cards and pen
- ◆ Optional: Field Guides for Birds, Insects, Reptiles, etc.

Common Core Standards (ELA K-2)

- ◆ ELA Writing: Research to Build and Support Knowledge K.7, 1.7, 2.7 3.7

Procedure

1. Read the book and talk about the different levels of a prairie.
2. Make a mural together of a prairie with sky, tall grasses, ground, deep roots in the soil.
3. On index cards, work together to write down the names of creatures living in each level of the prairie, as many as you can see in the illustrations or find in the text.
4. Put the cards on the floor upside down in piles according to where they live. Have each students choose one card, dividing up the class so that an equal amount of students pick from each pile.
5. Have them pin the creature's name on their back and then draw a picture (or cut it out of construction paper) of the creature and its home, trying to make it somewhat proportional to the prairie mural.
6. Have each student research their creatures.
7. Have each person cut out and then pin, tape, or glue their creature and its home to the right place on the mural and tell what he or she learned, and why that creature lives where it does.
8. After a set of drawings have been posted, have each child put a hand on the shoulder of another student creature or a plant on the mural that he or she would have eaten. This will form classroom chains of connection. This could be done outdoors, as a form of freeze tag. Each time a whistle is blown, the creatures run to put a hand on a new creature they would have eaten. For those who eat plants, they have to find a new plant outside they could grab to say they'd eat. When the whistle blows again, they all freeze.
9. Since there are so many creatures in a prairie, students could each get a new one each day from a different level until each child has had one creature from each level and the mural is overflowing with life and homes.



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Next Generation Science Standards (K-3)

- ◆ LS1.A: Structure and Function
- ◆ LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms
- ◆ LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems.

Additional Resources

- ◆ You can get a sense of the prairie heights and roots for your mural from the image of a prairie from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources site: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/biomes/prairie.html>
- ◆ For older students, you can play some games described by the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_lf_w7000_0033.pdf . You can also play the 20 Questions Prairie Species Identification Game from the Illinois State Museum: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/pdfs/pr_class.pdf
- ◆ Do a prairie scavenger hunt. Go in teams and find these items:
Feather, flower, saw-toothed leaf, grass seed head, something blue, something yellow, something brown, something black, something purple.
- ◆ Visit a prairie and sketch, paint, or describe on paper a favorite species or view of the prairie. Find the species in a field guide. Write a poem about a species.
- ◆ For students who are fourth grade and above and can get different plants from a prairie, you can try dying cloth from dyes made from specific prairie plants in this activity from the Illinois State Museum: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/pdfs/dye_plants.pdf
- ◆ Do a sound inventory. Go to a prairie and sit for fifteen minutes without talking (close your eyes while you're listening) and write down all the different sounds you hear and try to describe them.
- ◆ Walk through a prairie and find ten different smells that you can list and tell what they smelled like and where you smelled them.
You can smell the earth, different flowers and leaves flower, a marsh, etc. Experiment with smelling with your eyes open and eyes closed.
After you've collected things to smell, can you shut your eyes and have some one hold things to your nose and see if you can remember what some of them are?

Download a FREE



**Prairie That Nature Built
3D Pop-up App!**

**Watch the characters pop up and
move as you listen to the story
being read aloud! For iPad,
iPhone and Android devices.**