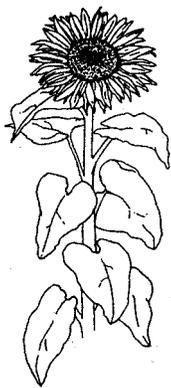


Prairie Scavenger Hunt



Overview

While visiting the “Listening to the Prairie” exhibition, students will search the exhibit panels to locate common animals, flowers, and insects. This activity will encourage students to slow down, carefully observe, and “listen to” the contents of the exhibit.

Suggested Grade Level

PreK - 1

Estimated Time

20 – 30 minutes

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. identify common animals, flowers, and insects found on the prairie.
2. work in teams, follow directions, and practice observation skills.

Materials

Activity Sheets A & B

Background

Listening to the Prairie; Farming in Nature’s Image is about agriculture in the North American prairie and the forces of change that turned vast grasslands into one of the most productive agricultural lands on earth. It reveals the relationship between prairie ecology and new ways to grow food.

The Fruitful Prairie – More than 25 percent of America’s productive cropland, pastureland, and rangeland are located in the North American prairie.

The Prairie Ecosystem – In its natural state, the prairie is a complex, fragile, and dynamic ecosystem that has sustained a diversity of plant and animal life for thousands of years.

From Native Grasses to Cultivated Grains – Deep fertile soils and a favorable growing climate influenced 19th and 20th century farmers to cultivate the prairie

by replacing native grasses with profitable grains and legumes such as wheat, corn, barley, rice, and soybeans.

Forces of Change – Natural forces, such as wind and fire, and human forces, including agriculture and technology, have altered much of the prairie ecosystem.

Sustainable Agricultural Practices – By listening to and observing nature, some farmers and ranchers have adopted practices that keep their operations productive and profitable, while protecting a diverse prairie ecosystem for future generations.

If history is our guide, some of today's alternatives will be tomorrow's accepted practices. Discover these principles and more. Explore how they affect you and your community.

Activity

1. Divide class into teams or small groups of two or three.
2. Distribute Activity Sheets A & B to each group.
3. Have each group search for the items and remember where they found them.
4. Walk together as a class or group through the exhibit and have the students point out the items they have found. Discuss the plants, animals, insects, etc. with the students, and what role these items play in the prairie ecosystem.

Items: ladybug, monarch butterfly, sun, sunflower, windmill, horse, deer, cow, pig, chicken, hawk, bison, tractor, grasshopper, field mouse, snake, corn, wheat, fox, coyote, fire, prairie dogs, grass, human – 24 total.

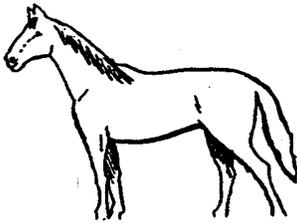
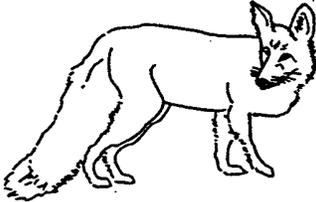
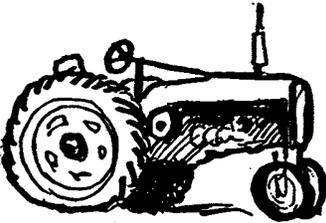
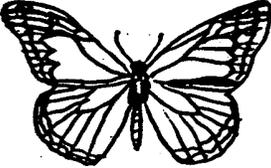
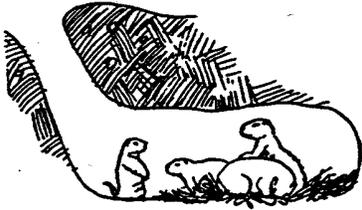
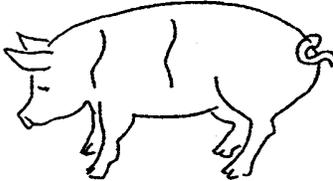
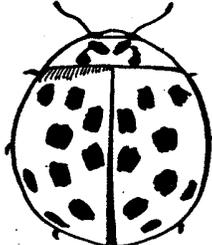
NOTE: There is at least one of every item in the exhibit, but the exact number of each item is not given. The number of items the students find will satisfy the activity.

Extensions

1. Have students color the illustrations either before or after visiting the exhibit.
2. Have each group of students select one or two items they have found in the exhibition, find out more information about each and share with the class.

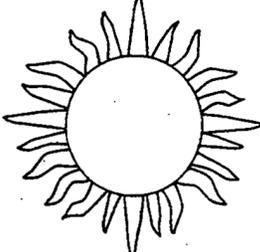
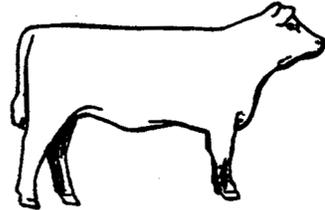
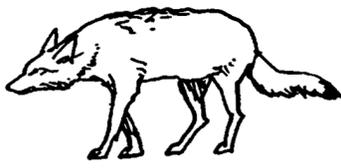
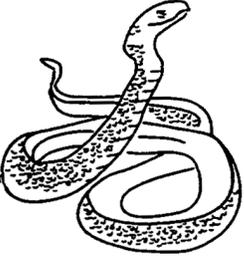
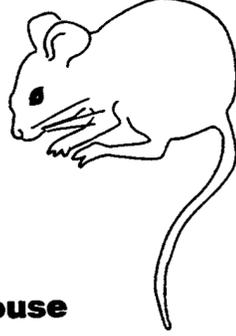
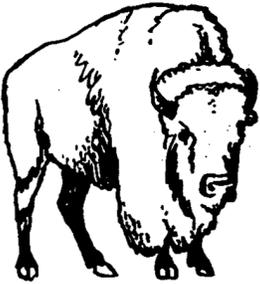
Prairie Scavenger Hunt

Find as many of the items on this sheet as you can in the exhibit. Write down the number you found in each box. Try to remember where you found them!

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Horse |  Fox |  Deer |
|  Tractor |  Human |  Hawk |
|  Monarch butterfly |  Prairie dogs |  Fire |
|  Chicken |  Pig |  Ladybug |

Prairie Scavenger Hunt

Find as many of the items on this sheet as you can in the exhibit. Write down the number you found in each box. Try to remember where you found them!

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Sun |  Corn |  Beef cattle |
|  Wheat |  Coyote |  Sunflower |
|  Snake |  Windmill |  Mouse |
|  Grass |  Bison |  Grasshopper |