



Wildlife Detectives: Educator Handout

OVERVIEW

Students will have the opportunity to learn about animal signs, including tracks, sounds and coats and how to infer that information through a series of “mystery scenes.” Each mystery scene incorporates a basic biology concept appropriate for early elementary.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Tracks, hair and sounds can be used to identify species
- Parents and offspring often engage in behaviors that help the offspring survive
- Animals have external parts that they use to locomote
- Animals can be predators or prey

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Use animal sign, such as hair, sounds and coat/ hair color to paint a picture of what animal species were in an area
- Use animal sign, such as hair, sounds and coat/ hair color to paint a picture of what animal species were doing in an area

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Curriculum	Standards
Wisconsin’s Standards for Science	SCI.CC4.K-2, SCI.CC1.K-2, SCI.SEP1.A.K-2

KEY TERMS

Tracks, coat, wildlife, detective, predator, prey, locomotion, survival

TIME REQUIREMENTS

15 minutes per mystery

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE

This activity is appropriate for elementary school students, K-2

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a general knowledge of animal species in Wisconsin



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MATERIALS

- Printed tracks of the animals for each mystery
- Optional: students can take notes of the tracks to make guesses

TEACHING TIPS

- Lay out the animal tracks and mystery scene before the students arrive for the day.

PROCEDURES

Try your best to lay out the printable animal tracks in an analogous way to how they exist on the PowerPoint slides.

Mystery #1 – Baby Animals

1. Customize the printable deer tracks so that they work with your classroom. Remember, one set of deer tracks needs to be half the size of the adult's.
2. Lay out the deer tracks in your classroom before the students arrive for class.
3. Ask the students to take an initial look at the tracks and then ask them to sit down for the PowerPoint slides.
4. Run through the PowerPoint slides about clues that wildlife detectives can use to understand animals. Ask the students for examples along the way.
5. Once you are ready to work the first mystery, pause and ask the students if they have any questions.
6. For mystery #1, ask the students the questions that are on the slide about the tracks and coat colors. Move on to the next slide for the answers.
7. For the last slide on mystery #1, highlight the fact that baby animals stay with their parents to improve survival. Talk about some examples in the pictures (geese goslings, coyote pups, porcupine porcupettes).

Mystery #2 - Locomotion

1. Customize the printable duck tracks so that they work with your classroom. Remember, the tracks must disappear for a little to emulate flight.
2. Lay out the duck tracks in your classroom before the students arrive for class.
3. Ask the students to take an initial look at the tracks and then ask them to sit down for the PowerPoint slides.
4. If the student's need a refresher about clues used to learn about animals, run through the PowerPoint slides about clues that wildlife detectives can use to understand animals. Ask the students for examples along the way.
5. For mystery #2, ask the students the questions that are on the slide about the tracks and coat colors. Move on to the next slide for the answers.
6. For the last slide on mystery #2, highlight the fact that animals have different body parts for diverse ways of moving, or locomotion. The duck uses its webbed feet to swim and wings to fly.



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Mystery #3 – Predator and Prey

1. Customize the printable fox and rabbit tracks so that they work with your classroom. Remember, the rabbit tracks will disappear once they run into the fox tracks.
2. Lay out the tracks in your classroom before the students arrive for class.
3. Ask the students to take an initial look at the tracks and then ask them to sit down for the PowerPoint slides.
4. If the students need a refresher about clues used to learn about animals, run through the PowerPoint slides about clues that wildlife detectives can use to understand animals. Ask the students for examples along the way.
5. For mystery #3, ask the students the questions that are on the slide about the tracks and coat colors. Move on to the next slide for the answers.
6. For the last slide on mystery #3, highlight the fact that animals can be predators or prey and what those terms mean.
7. Feel free to develop more “wildlife detective” scenes. If you have completed the three that the Snapshot team put together, you can show the kids their “wildlife detective” badge on the last slide (*optional: printable badges attached for students*).