

**LESSON: Prairie Hike & Investigation****GRADE: 2<sup>nd</sup>****TIME: 45 min.****SUMMARY:**

Students do a basic prairie investigation using simple journal entries. They divide their nature journal into sections and label each section “plants”, “animals”, “non-living”, and “discoveries”. First, students record the temperature, sky, and wind on the prairie. They list plants, animals, or signs of animals they find in the prairie. They sit quietly by themselves and sketch the prairie and try to include as many labels and words as possible. Later, students come together to use their journals to create a class list of discoveries related to the prairie. Based upon the living and non-living things they discovered, students work together to write a concluding definition of prairie.

**OBJECTIVES: Iowa Core****Science****Biological Evolution: Unity & Diversity**

- **2-LS4-1** Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

**Literacy****Speaking and Listening**

- **SL.2.1.** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.2.4.** Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
- **SL.2.6.** Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

**Writing**

- **W.2.7.** Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., record science observations).
- **W.2.8.** Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



## MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

- Blank paper or nature journals
- Example of journal entry & background information, included.
- Pencils

## PRESENTATION:

Explain to students that today, they will be learning about the prairie. Ask students what do they already know about the prairie. List their answers on the board. What animals live here? What types of plants are here? What non-living things can they find in a prairie?

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Tell students that today they will be using their nature journals to investigate the prairie. They will be sitting quietly on the trail and recording information about the living and non-living organisms that they find.
2. Before they go outside, ask students to prepare their nature journals. Have students record the date, time, weather, location and temperature at the top on their nature journal. They will also need to create a title for their entry such as "Prairie Investigation". Invite students to be creative in naming their entry. Next, instruct students to divide their paper into 4 quadrants. Each quadrant should then be labeled different names. The labels are "Plants", "Animals", "Non-living" and "Discoveries".
3. Review expectations with students as students should journal in each quadrant. Remind them to use words, numbers, and pictures. Provide examples if needed.
4. Pass out clip-boards, journals, and pencils to adult chaperons. Have all the groups form a single file line to get ready to head outside. Remind students that naturalists are happy outside, explorers, adventurers, respectful, and quiet. They ask questions, use words, numbers and pictures, and share their discoveries.



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**Prairie Hike & Investigation/ Science, Literacy**

This lesson is a part of Project Bluestem at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

5. Once outside, have students sit quietly along the trail. Provide them with time to take notes in each quadrant and to draw. Encourage them to use all of their senses to explore the area around them.
6. After about 15 minutes of searching, have students come together. Tell students that they are going to head back inside. While they are walking to go back inside, ask them to think of something they learned about the prairie that they didn't know before.
7. Once students are inside, have students share their observations and drawings. After sharing, ask students to write one complete sentence about their time outside. To spark their writing, ask them questions like, "What surprised them?", "What did they find interesting?", and "What did they learn that they never knew before?"



## REFLECTION/JOURNAL PROMPT:

***Prairie Hike and Investigation***

Whiteboard lesson set-up:  
**On whiteboard:**

Living      Non-living

Journal Page Setup:

NSNWR	Name	Date	Time
Weather	<u>Prairie Hike</u>		
Temp			

  

Plants	Animals
Non-living	Close-up