

Wild Animal Exploration

Overview

Students will learn strategies for comparing and contrasting different objects and things, especially focusing on wild and domestic animals. Students will also learn about what wild animals can be seen in Oregon. This lesson can be used prior to your visit to the Museum of Natural and Cultural History.

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn strategies for comparing and contrasting items
- Understand what a wild animal is
- Understand what a domestic animal is
- Learn about the different wild animals in Oregon

Vocabulary

- **Wild Animal:** an animal living in nature without human control or care
- **Domestic Animal:** an animal living with people
- **Compare:** to look at two or more things closely in order to see what is similar or different about them
- **Contrast:** to compare two or more things to show how they are different

Background Information

Wild animals can be found all over Oregon, even in the Willamette Valley where many people live. Wild animals may look similar to the pets students have at home, but there are many differences between wild and domestic animals. They look, eat, and live differently.

Wild animals live in nature without human care. They may live in packs—like wolves—or in schools—like salmon. On the other hand, some wild animals live solitarily—like cougars. Wild animals are usually larger than domestic animals, with much more muscle and larger mouths, teeth, and jaws. They must also hunt for their food by seeking out smaller, weaker prey or by foraging for berries and plants. Wild animals depend on their natural surroundings to survive.

Domestic animals are often kept as pets in human homes. Cats, dogs, and fish will depend on their owners to feed, bathe, and house them. They are generally unthreatened by encounters with other domestic animals and rely on humans for all of their needs.

By comparing and contrasting how each of these animals' lives, students will know

Subject

Science



Grade

K-2nd

Time

30-45 minutes

Materials

- Pictures of compare/contrast objects (or actual objects if available): square vs. rectangle; pen vs. pencil; apple vs. orange; water vs. soda.
- Pictures of wild animals: mountain lion, wolf, and salmon.
- Pictures of domestic animals: cat, dog, and goldfish.
- PowerPoint/PDF resource
- Computer
- Projector
- Smart Board/screen
- Pictures of domestic animals (20 sets)
- Pictures of wild animals (20 sets)

Set Up

- Students may sit in a designated carpet space or remain seated at their desks/table groups (they will need some space to do movement activities).
- Place compare/contrast pictures face down on floor/dry erase board or use projector with PowerPoint resource.

Standards (NGSS)

how to identify them outside of their homes. Understanding what specific animals look like and how they live will help humans and animals co-exist.

Classroom Activity (25-35 min)

Intro: Ask students if they have ever compared or contrasted anything before. Tell students comparing is finding what is the same and contrasting is finding what is different. Tell them we might compare and contrast something to make a decision like what sports to play or what to eat for dinner.

Ask students to compare basketball and football. What is the same about the two sports (use a ball, two teams play, must get ball in a net/goal, etc.)? Ask students to contrast basketball and football. What is different about the two sports (shape of the ball, rules, positions, etc.)? Ask students what are other things we can compare and contrast (weather, food, drinks, etc.)?

Tell students you have different pictures (or items) to compare and contrast (shapes, school supplies, foods, drinks, etc.). Allow students to explore strategies for comparing and contrasting. Ask students how they are making their choices when comparing and contrasting.

Activity:

Begin by asking students if they know what makes an animal “wild” (live in the woods, dangerous, large, etc.). Tell students a wild animal lives in nature without human care and little or no human contact. Ask students to name some wild animals (bear, lion, raccoon, etc.).

Next, ask students if they know what makes an animal domestic (live indoors, cared for by humans, cats, dogs, etc.). Tell students a domestic animal lives with humans. Ask students to name some domestic animals (cat, dog, hamster, gerbil, etc.). Tell students you will compare and contrast different wild and domestic animals by looking at how they are similar and how they are different.

Cougar vs. Cat:

Show students the pictures of the cougar and the cat. Have students identify what each animal is. Next, tell students to show you how cougars *move* (students move around the classroom as cougars). Now, show how cats *move* (students move around the classroom as cats). Is it the same or different (same!!)? How is it the same (walk on four legs, pounce, have tail)? Tell the students to show you how a cat *sounds* (students purr, meow, etc.). Next, tell the students to show how a cougar *sounds* (students growl, scream, purr, etc.). Do they sound the same or different (answers vary)? How is it the same (both purr, both growl)? How is it different (cougar screams are louder, cat meows are quieter)? Finally, have students tell you what cats eat (tuna, soft food, hard food, etc.). Now, tell what

Science

- K-ESS3-1: Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.
- 1-LS3-1: Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.
- 2-LS4-1: Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

cougars eat (fish, deer, elk, etc.). Is it the same or different (different!)? How is it different (one hunts, humans feed cats, etc.)? Make sure to record students' answers on paper, the board, or electronically.

Follow the same line of questioning and activity for **Wolf vs. Dog** and **Goldfish vs. Salmon**. Include other animals as needed.

Conclusion (5-10 min)

Ask students what were some ways they compared and contrasted the different animals (by looking at their bodies, thinking about their own pets, etc.). Tell students we can use these strategies for anything we are comparing and contrasting.

Do an assessment of learning by telling students to match pictures of animals (dog, cat, goldfish, hamster, cougar, wolf, lion, salmon, etc.) with their specific classification (domestic or wild). Allow students to work independently or with a partner.

Tell students they will be visiting the Museum of Natural and Cultural History soon, where they will learn more about wild animals, how to track them, and what wild animals live (and have lived) in Oregon.

Lesson Adaptations

Students with visual impairments may be given personal visuals to explore closely or paired with another student to work as a team.