



Lesson: Skulls, Tracks, and Furs

This lesson should follow the “What is an Ecosystem” lesson

Grade Level: K-12

Activity Duration: 1 hour

Objectives:

- Students will make observations about animal skulls, track molds, furs, and eggs
- Students will consider where each animal fits in the food chain
- Students will consider different adaptation that each animal has made for survival
- Students will research a Yellowstone animal and learn about its habitat

Kit Materials:

- “Food Chains” poster
- “Ecosystems” poster
- Animal pelts
- Animal skulls
- Animal track molds
- Bird eggs

Classroom Materials:

- School library or computers
- Index cards or blank computer paper
- Markers

Lesson Procedure:

1. Remove the pelts, skulls, eggs, and furs from the box and place them in a safe location (on tables or carpet). Ask students to take turns matching up the animals and their various parts, and have them guess which animal is which. For younger students, make a list of the names on the board. For older students, see if they can come up with it themselves.
2. As a class, create a large label card for each animal (index cards work well).
3. Use blank paper or notecards to create different food chain levels (*primary producer, primary consumer, secondary consumer, tertiary consumer, apex predator*)
4. Ask students to take the animal cards and place them in the categories that they think the animals match. The teacher should then take the skulls and other parts to the correct groupings.
5. Go through each group and discuss why those animals are in that particular group. Then, discuss if any of these animals have adaptations that help them survive. Ask students to point out evidence of these adaptations in the skulls, pelts, tracks, etc.
6. For students in 3rd grade and above, have students pick an animal and conduct research on it. Students can pick animals that are not in the kit, if need be. The length and depth of this research can vary depending on grade level. It should include:
 - a. Food
 - b. Habitat
 - c. Winter survival strategies
 - d. Scientific name
 - e. Offspring

Older students can also research the animal's anatomy, reproductive tendencies, nutritional needs, etc. Have students share their research with the class!