

DICKINSON COUNTY NATURE CENTER

GRADE TK — “CSI: CRITTER SCENE INVESTIGATION”

Core expectations

K-LS1-1 Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

K-ESS3-1 Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and places they live.

Activity Time

One 30-minute session

Contact

Environmental
education coordinator
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Program Alignment with Iowa Core Curriculum

Disciplinary Core Ideas

- **LS1.C Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms:** All animals need food in order to live and grow. They obtain their food from plants or from other animals. Plants need water and light to live and grow.
- **ESS3.A Natural Resources:** Living things need water, air, and resources from the land, and they live in places that have the things they need. Humans use natural resources for everything they do.

Investigative questions

- What do animals need in order to survive?

Investigative phenomena

- The naturalist will begin by laying out a black sheet and walking first in baby powder, then across the sheet to demonstrate how tracks are left behind.

Practices (SEPs)

- Students will use a the trackscape to demonstrate relationships in the natural world.
- Students will use observations from the trackscape to describe patterns in what all living creatures need in order to survive.

Cross Cutting Concepts students will identify

- Systems in the natural world have parts that work together.
- Patterns in animal tracks and signs can be observed and used as evidence to describe where an animal was going and what it was doing.



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Supplies

All supplies brought by the nature center unless otherwise arranged.

- Black sheet
- Baby powder
- Trackscape
- Flip books

Program Overview

Background

Animals are all around us in the wild, but sometimes they are hard to see because they hide or run away when they hear noise or sense danger. Luckily, animals will leave clues about who they are and what they were doing. Animal clues, or signs, can be tracks, scat (poop), scratched bark, underground holes or tunnels, nests, feathers or fur, and so much more! These clues allow people to learn about the animal without actually seeing it. Animal species have unique tracks, scat and signs that they leave behind so we can identify which animal made a particular clue. These clues help reveal a story about the animal and we can create ideas of what the animal was doing, where it was going or even what it was eating.

Even though animals may leave different clues behind and have different stories, all animals have a few things in common. All animals need food, water, shelter and air in order to survive. How they get these things, or where they look for them, may vary depending on the animal. However, it is something all living creatures need and will search for daily.

Procedure

1. The naturalist will begin by laying out a black sheet and walking first in baby powder and then across the sheet. What happened? Each child will get the opportunity to also walk across the black sheet and leave their “tracks.”
2. The naturalist will then ask the students what story their track scene tells? Who was here? Where did they go? What were they doing?
3. Just as the class left their tracks on the black sheet, many animals leave their own tracks and signs in nature. We can look at these tracks to make guesses about where animals were going and what they were doing.
4. Next, the naturalist will lay out the trackscape and give students a minute to look it over. Students will then be broken into six groups and each assigned a different track.
5. The naturalist will pass out flip books and students will need to identify the animal that left their track, then come up with a story about where that animal was going and what it was doing.
6. Students will then have the opportunity to share with the class their animal and the story they came up with about their animal. Groups should make sure that everyone in their group gets a chance to say something if they would like.
7. The naturalist will then go over how each animal was different and each animal had a different story, but was there anything every animal had in common? Each animal visited the water! No matter how different every animal is, there are four things every animal needs to survive — including humans — and they are water, food, shelter and space. These are what make up an animal’s habitat.