

Teacher Guide for ASK

February 2013

This guide was prepared by Betty Lou Askin, a retired educator who lives in Toronto, Ontario

Objectives:

- To learn more about grasses, grains and grasslands.
- To appreciate the interactions and interdependency between the prairie and the wildlife.

Pre-reading:

1. Let the students suggest what they think might be included in this issue of ASK based on the title.
2. Ask them what they think is happening on the cover.
3. View the Contents page and discuss the illustrations and the article titles.

Scoops

Name Something Shiny

- What is the world's shiniest living thing?
- Describe it.
- What do scientists think about this berry?

Teaching the Teacher

- Describe the experiment.
- What was the conclusion?

A Whale of a Find

- What did Charlie find?
- Describe it.
- What is its purpose?

Roaches to the Rescue

- Describe how roaches can be controlled.
- Why is this of great significance?
- Ask the students to look for more science "scoops" when they read printed material and when they watch television news/shows. Create a bulletin board to post their findings.

Nestor's Dock

- Why were the students bored?
- Explain why they were wrong.

Oceans of Grass

Reading for information:

- Who were Lewis and Clark?
- Describe how the grass changes going westward from the Mississippi River.
- List 4 names for the grasslands.
- Where do grasslands exist?
- Explain where different grasses grow.
- Describe the climate that grasses can tolerate.
- Why are grasses water conservationists?
- Explain why the root system is important.

- How does fire help the grasses?
- Using your own words and the information on page 10, write a paragraph describing how the prairie was formed.
- Explain how grass makes food for itself and others.
- Create a food chain starting with grass.
- How do the creatures that burrow in the grasslands help the soil and grass?

Little School on the Prairie

Ideas to use with this article:

- What are the students of Sunset Ridge School hoping to do?
- How did they obtain coneflower seeds?
- Describe how they are planting the seeds.
- What will happen when the coneflowers bloom?
- Describe the prairie as the settlers would have seen it when they arrived.
- What did scientists attempt to do in the 1930's?
- Make a list telling why the students like their prairie environment.
- Creative Work:
Develop a news report telling the public about the work being done by the students and their reasons for doing it.
Have the students work in groups. Ask them to create an interview with the Sunset Ridge students using questions and answers. One student in the group could be the interviewer while the others would be the grade four students.

Gopher's Guide

- Use the Read Aloud method. Let individuals take turns reading this article. Afterwards, discuss the information.

Growing with the Grass

Use these as a focus for the reading:

- What were Grace Snyder's 3 wishes?
- Describe what she saw upon reaching her new home.
- Explain the change in her mother's life style.
- Tell how Grace reacted to nature on the prairie.
- What made Grace hurt?
- Why did Grace like sundown?
- What is the name of the dark bugs she watched? (Hint-their name is in this magazine)
- Describe the battle that Grace watched.
- Creative Writing:
Use this article to create a brief daily diary for Grace.

A Hunger for Grass

Questions to use for discussion and follow-up:

- Why do the wildebeests migrate?
- Why is grass "tough"?
- Why are the teeth of the wildebeest specially designed?
- Explain the difference between zebra's and the wildebeest's digestion.
- What is "super spit"?
- Describe the chewing and digestion of a wildebeest.
- Explain how grasses differ.
- How is grass kept nutritious?

- How do wildebeest help the grasses of the plains?
- What drives the wildebeest to migrate?
- Why is there danger during migration?
- Why is the southern soil important to the wildebeest?
- Tell why the wildebeest needs both the south and the north parts of the Serengeti.
- Why do the Thomson's gazelles stay in one place?

The Return of the Horse

Reading for understanding:

- Describe Hyracotherium.
- Where did Hyracotherium live?
- Why did these creatures begin to change/evolve?
- Where did they travel?
- How were they able to leave Alaska for Asia?
- Who was Equus?
- Where did they continue to migrate?
- Why did the horse become extinct in America?
- How did America get populated again with horses?

Jimmy the Bug

- How do stripes help protect zebras?
- How do zebras keep cool?
- Why do tsetse flies not like zebras?
- How may have zebras obtained their stripes?

Don't forget to

- See a rescue roach at askmagkids.com/links
- See how to make a wildlife habitat in your own backyard at www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat
- Complete the contest instructions and share your ideas with your classmates.