

MUTUAL of OMAHA'S
WILD KINGDOM

Tune in Sundays at 7pm E/P

Habitat Murals

Objective

To teach students about habitats and to put information learned about the animals featured in *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* into context.

Grades

K-6

Materials

- butcher paper or poster board
- pencils, markers, paint pens or poster paints
- construction paper
- found objects such as twigs, sticks, reeds, grasses, leaves, etc.

Assignment

You can divide habitats into half a dozen categories, or a dozen or more specific categories, based on the age of your students.

General habitats: Grades K—2

- Forest
- Grasslands
- Desert
- Tundra (dry, treeless land in the Arctic)
- Salt Water
- Fresh Water

Specific habitats: Grades 3—6

Forest habitats:

- Coniferous or Taiga (evergreen trees)
- Deciduous (trees have leaves that fall seasonally)
- Tropical rainforest (high rainfall and hot or warm year-round)
- Temperate rainforest (high rainfall but mild temperatures; found only near oceans and mountains together)

Grassland habitats:

- Savannah – Africa (flat grassland found in tropical regions)
- Prairie – central North America, in states such as Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana (large area of flat or rolling, mostly treeless, grassland)
- Steppe – southeastern Europe (vast, semi-dry, grass-covered plain)
- Pampas – in southern South America, mainly in Argentina (extensive, treeless, grassland area)

A. Basic / Grades K—2:

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to create scenes from the following basic habitats:

Forest, Grasslands, Desert, Tundra, Salt Water, Fresh Water

B. Complex / Grades 3—6:

Have older students work on more specific habitats, either alone or in pairs:

Freshwater: Rivers and Streams; Ponds and Lakes; Wetlands

Salt Water: Temperate Ocean; Tropical Ocean; Coastal

Forests: Temperate Forests; Rainforests; Taiga

Grasslands: Prairie; Steppe; Pampas; Savannah

Desert

Tundra

Example:

Tropical Rainforest mural would show different strata: forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergents

Instructions

1. Students start by researching habitats and making sketches.

- start with library books about animals and habitats
- make lists of animals and plants that live in your assigned habitat
- find pictures in books, magazines, and other sources to help you visualize
- sketch ideas and collaborate

2. Using butcher paper or poster board, make posters or murals of different habitats to hang in the classroom.

- make a small thumbnail sketch before drawing on big paper
- write your habitat name at the top of your mural in bold letters
- sketch outlines in pencil
- now add more detail using markers, as well as construction paper cut-outs
- add 3-D features using leaves, grasses, reeds, small sticks, etc. brought from home or collected during recess or designated outdoor class time
- last, label any plants as well as features particular to your habitat's geography, climate, or vegetation

3. Now add animals to their natural habitats. Using the lists compiled in step 1 as reference, students should scout out artwork.

- one person from each group writes their list of animals (compiled in step 1) on the board for all to see
- all students are asked to be on the lookout during their research for animals that belong in fellow students' habitat murals as well
- students may draw, trace, photocopy, or cut out pictures of animals from magazines or the Internet

- they should then affix the pictures to the murals and label them clearly with specific animal names

4. As you collect Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom animal cards, use masking tape to affix them to their corresponding habitats. Label these animal cards on the mural, using the same labels as for the animals in step 3.

