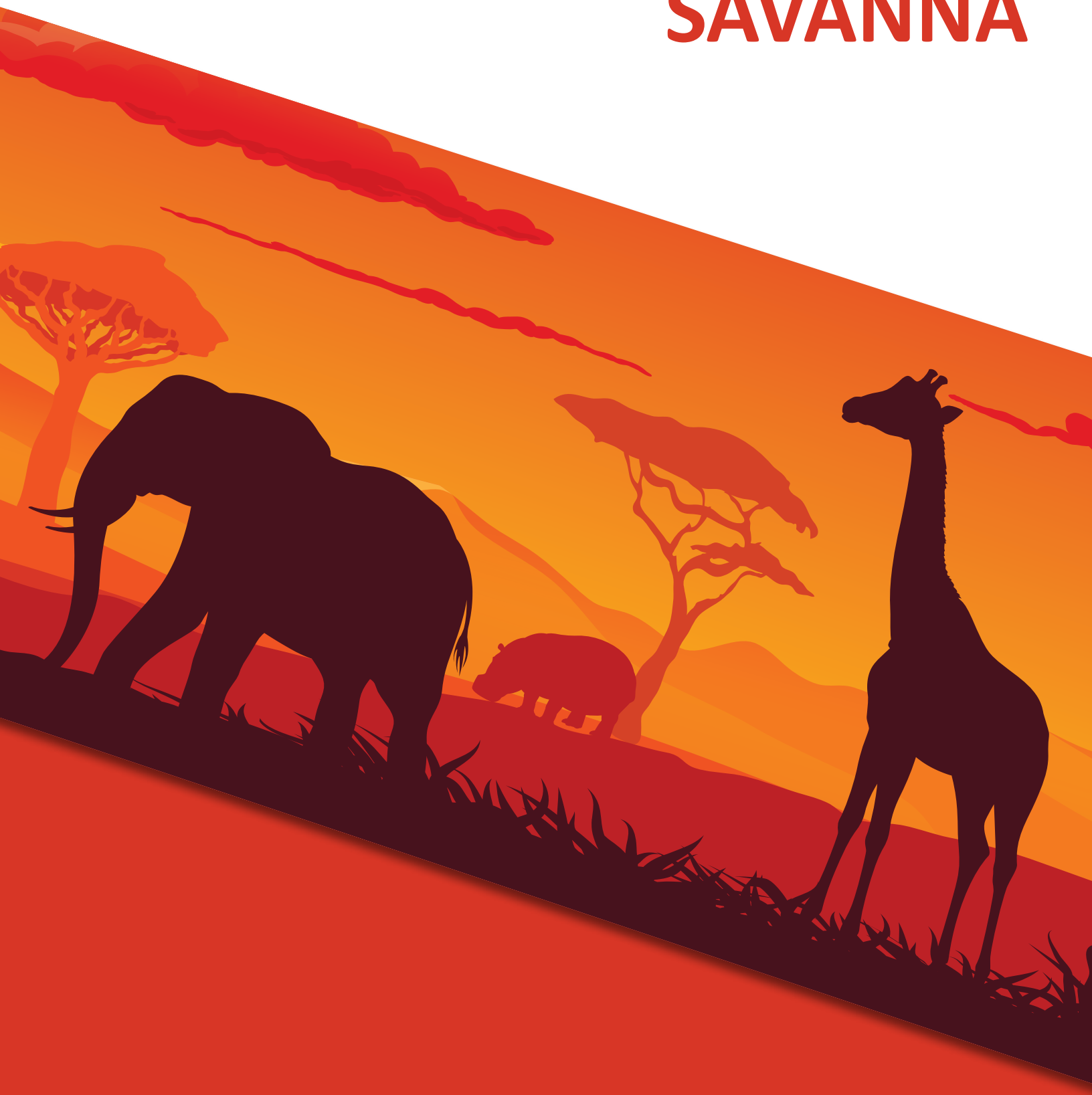
SAVANNA



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Language and Literacy

Alphabet Sort: Themed Alphabet

EZ.018.LA.1001-1002

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will identify and recognize uppercase and lowercase letters.
Students will sort letters by different attributes.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Using letter tiles and sorting mats, students sort themed letters by different attributes like vowels and consonants and curvy and straight lines. This exposure and repetition to letters helps them easily recognize the alphabet in both school and everyday environments.

WHAT TO DO

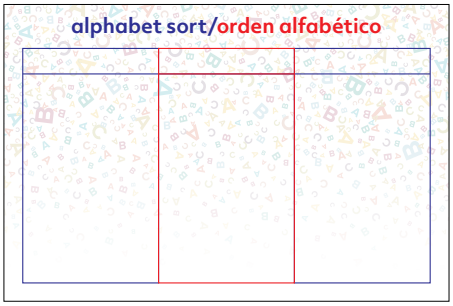
1. Introduce the sorting boards and letters to the students. Write student or teacher determined sorting categories on the boards. Consider categories such as vowels versus consonants and letter shapes, like curvy lines, straight lines, or a combination of both.
2. Place letters in a cup, bowl, or other container. Have students remove a letter, say the letter name, and sort into the appropriate category. Continue sorting until all the letters have been sorted.

PLAY TIPS

- Have students write letters in pre-determined categories rather than sort tangible letters.
- Ask students to make letters using Playdoh or clay and have them sort into categories.

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Mathematics

Animal Dice Match: Number Cards

EZ.018.LA.1003-1004

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will recognize numbers.
Students will strengthen their number recognition skills by using one-to-one correspondence.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Students can use numerical tools to match and organize. Engaging in number-matching and ordering games helps students strengthen their number recognition skills while encouraging them to subitize. Understanding which numbers come before and after others enhances their grasp of number value and sequence.

WHAT TO DO

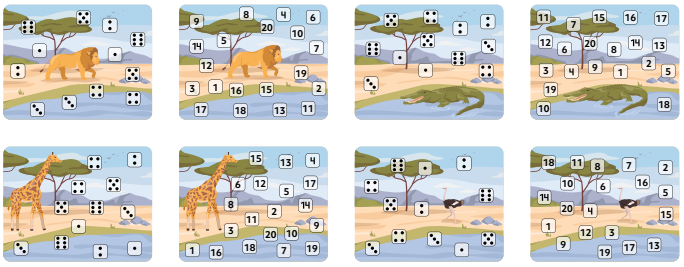
1. Place the animal dice cards, dice, math counters, and number cards in a free choice center. Demonstrate rolling a die and using a counter to mark a number on a card. Ask a student to select the correct number card as you mark a number.
2. Encourage students to take turns in the free choice center rolling a die, reading the number, marking the number with a counter, and selecting the correct number card to correlate with the rolled number.

PLAY TIPS

- Use the dice and blocks to create towers. Have students roll a die, count the number of dots, and build a tower with the corresponding number of blocks, counting as they stack.
- Use numbered dice (1-12) instead and match to number cards.

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Mathematics

Counting and Measurement

EZ.018.LA.1005

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will count items up to 10 with one-to-one correspondence.
Students will begin to add to and take away items.
Students will begin to use nonstandard measurement tools.

Students use counting manipulatives, non-standard forms of measurement like Unifix Cubes, and themed counters, to practice one-to-one correspondence and early practices of measurement using themed math cards. Measurement can be an abstract concept for young children. Manipulatives like blocks, cubes, or cups provide a tangible way to understand concepts like length, and height. By physically comparing and ordering objects, they can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

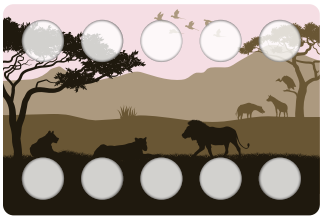
WHAT TO DO

After modeling how to use the mats, place the counting and measurement mats in a learning center as a teacher-directed or student-directed experience. As a teacher-directed experience, guide students to use manipulatives to show one-to-one correspondence and length. As a student-directed experience, allow students to freely explore the manipulatives and mats.

PLAY TIPS

- Use the math manipulatives to reinforce sorting by color and type. Encourage students to count how many are in each category. Encourage students to think of other ways to sort the manipulatives.
- Ask students to use the manipulatives to create patterns. Create simple pattern mats (ABAB, AABB, ABB) for additional support and guidance.

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Mathematics

Making Patterns

EZ.018.LA.1006

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

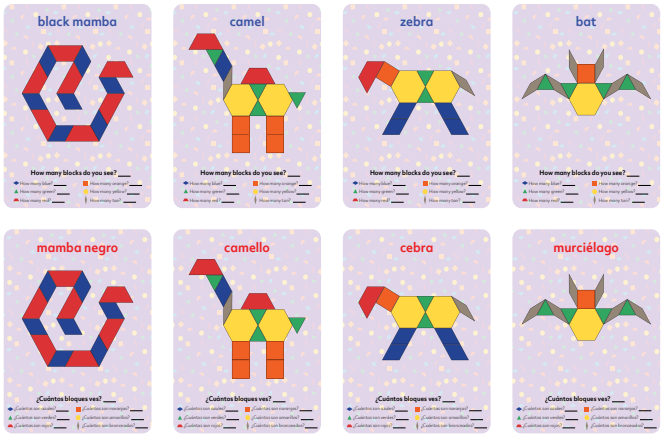
WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

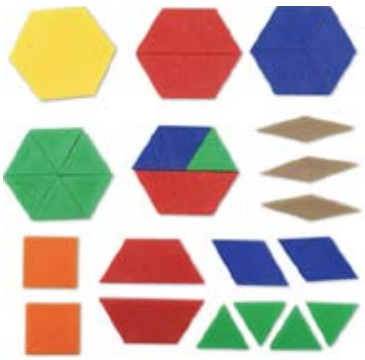
PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.018.LA.1007

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines. Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

Syllable Awareness

EZ.018.LA.1009

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to blend and segment syllables in words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Recognizing that words can be broken down into syllables or units of sound is a phonological skill.

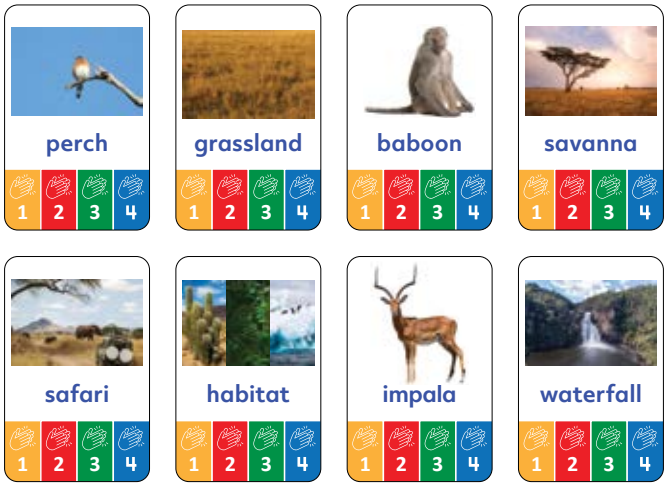
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the vocabulary cards as a guided activity or free choice center activity. Have students clap the number of beats on the vocabulary card and indicate the number by moving the clip.

PLAY TIPS

- Provide simple instruments to reinforce the number of syllables. Rather than clap the number of syllables in a word, students can shake the number of syllables.
- Students can use their body to emphasize syllables in a word. Have students jump up and down, tap their toes, march in place, do jumping jacks, or tap their head to count syllables.

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Language and Literacy

Rhyming Awareness

EZ.018.LA.1010

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to recognize rhyming words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Rhyming activities help children listen for ending sounds in words, a precursor to phonics activities in late preschool.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the rhyming cards as a small group or free choice activity. Say the words on the cards together and help students to identify the rhyming pairs. Students can connect the rhyming pairs by placing the cards side by side on the table.

PLAY TIPS

- Play rhyming words with body parts. Have students touch their head, nose, arm, etc. and think of a word that rhymes with the body part.
- Play, *I Spy with My Little Eye*, using target items in the classroom. For example, decide on something in the classroom, like *door* as the target word. Then state, "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with *floor*." The students look around the classroom for something that rhymes with floor.

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Language and Literacy

Onset and Rime Awareness

EZ.018.LA.1011

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to identify and segment one-syllable words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Onset and rime activities help children identify patterns in words.

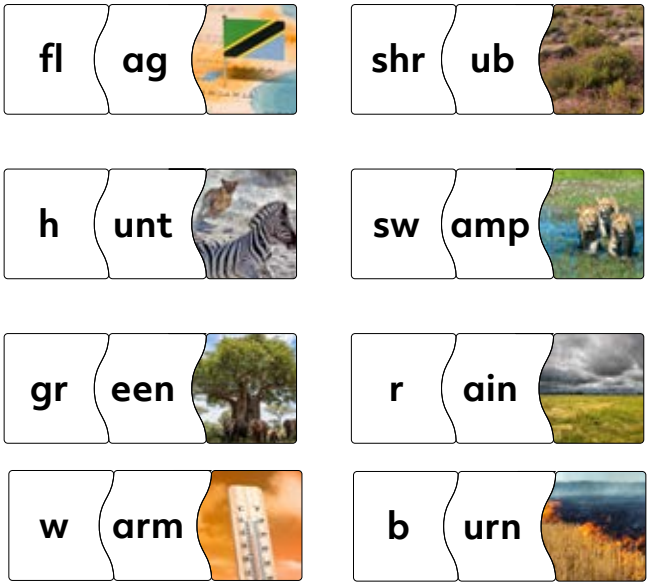
WHAT TO DO

Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the onset together, the rime together, and the picture that identifies the word. As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a word.

PLAY TIP

Attach beginning and ending sounds to a set (2) of large dice. Have students roll the dice and say the word created, putting the onset and rime together.

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Language and Literacy

I Spy in the Grass: Word Bank Words

EZ.018.LA.1012

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objective:
Students will find and recognize sight words.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students can search for word bank words in sensory bags filled with shredded paper to simulate grass. Styrene word bank words and matching cards are provided. As students become familiar with more words from the word bank, their understanding of sentence and story meanings improves, boosting their reading comprehension and confidence.

WHAT TO DO

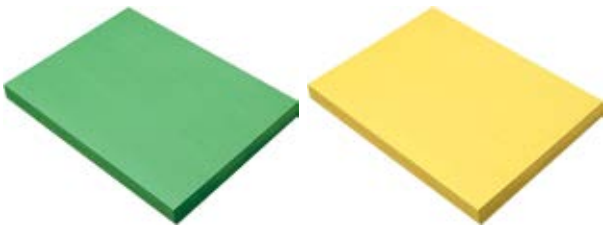
Shred green and yellow paper using the cutter to simulate grass (paper cutter is not for student use). Add the paper to several gallon-sized Ziploc bags. Add several word bank matching cards to each Ziploc bag as well. Encourage students to match the word bank cards to the word bank matching cards in the Ziploc bags. Ask students to call out letters as they match the word bank words to word bank matching cards.

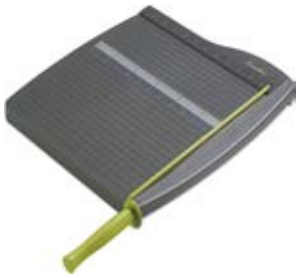
PLAY TIPS

- Consider adding other sensory materials to the Ziploc bags to simulate the savanna like dried corn, lentils, and brown rice.
- Have students trace the letters of the word bank word with their finger as they manipulate the Ziploc bags.

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Science

Predator and Prey

EZ.018.LA.1013

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will listen to non-fiction texts to relate them to new experiences and situations. Students will participate in theme related scavenger hunts.

Predator and prey is an important relationship in the savanna. Together, they help maintain a balance in the ecosystems around the world. As a small group, students participate in a predator and prey scavenger hunt. After receiving an animal identification card, small groups find the hidden prey in the classroom with supportive clues from the educator. Scavenger hunt activities teach students the importance of teamwork and reinforce their problem-solving skills.

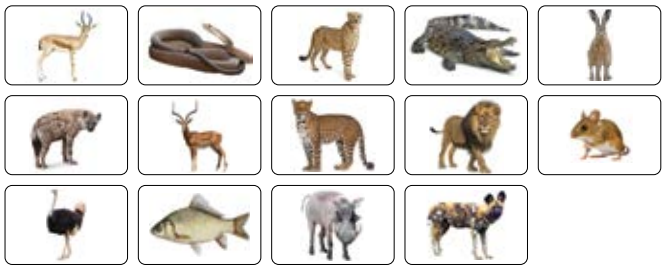
WHAT TO DO

1. Read books about the predator and prey relationship, such as *What Eats That?* by Ryan Jacobson and *1-2-3 Predators Bite!* by the American Museum of Natural History. Ask students to think about the differences between a predator and a prey. Ask questions like, “Why do you think there are prey and predator animals in the wild?,” “How are predators able to hunt prey?,” and “How are prey able to avoid predators?”
2. Show students the prey and predator animal cards and identify animal on each. Hide the prey animal cards around the classroom. Give each student in the group a predator card and encourage them to find the prey. After all the prey animal cards have been found, discuss the relationships between the animals.

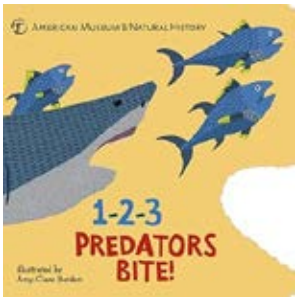
PLAY TIPS

- Play predator-prey tag games outside. Encourage students to camouflage themselves using clothing or other barriers as they hide from predators.
- Observe webcams in the wild and ask students to identify prey and predator animals. Webcam resources: Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Audubon Society.

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Social and Emotional

Mindful Movements

EZ.018.LA.1014

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will enhance their listening skills.
Students will control their body to make intentional decisions and movements.

Young children learn to control their body, respect personal boundaries, and focus on the moment by listening to detailed directions and instructions. Students move like different animals in the savanna by exploring animal movement cards and listening to direction from the educator. Listening plays an integral part in a child's development. As children become more proficient in listening, they enhance their communication abilities, including the development of their vocabulary, speech, and language skills.

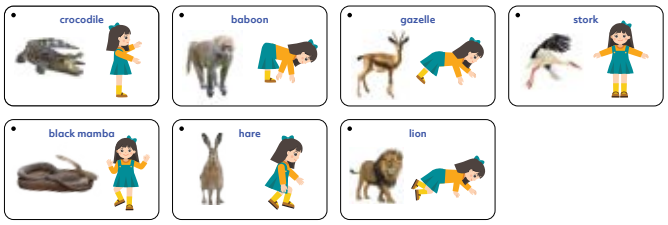
WHAT TO DO

1. Review animal behaviors using the animal movement cards. Give each student a personal space mat and reiterate the purpose (to give each friend their own space without bumping into another friend). Allow students to practice each animal behavior after positioning the personal space mats.
2. Practice each animal behavior a second time, asking students to think about each movement before they display the movement. Introduce the word *mindful* as the practice of focusing entirely on something without letting distractions interfere.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to think about the word mindful and share what it means to them. Guide the conversation, if needed, with the following: "Mindful means to pay attention to what is happening right now." Draw attention to what is happening in the classroom at that moment. Ask students to think about mindful walking, exercising, writing, etc. and consider how mindfulness changes the action.
- You can learn a lot about mindful movements by observing animals. Encourage students to observe animals in nature or at home and facilitate a discussion about mindfulness in animals.

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Mathematics

Savannas Around the World

EZ.018.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Small Group and Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will identify animals that live in a savanna.
Students will compare animal features and characteristics.

Savannas are tropical grasslands, found near the equator around the world. Animals in this region must thrive in a warm climate that has a dry and a rainy season. Students can use animal cards and a map marked with savanna biomes to categorize animals based on the regions they inhabit around the world. These early categorizing activities help children recognize patterns, make connections, and understand relationships between different items.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the activity as a center. Students can sort animals by animal type (mammals, birds, reptiles, or fish), how they travel, and where they live. Use the savanna biome maps to sort animals by where they live, discussing the traits and features that help an animal live in a particular savanna habitat. Make connections between the map and globe, pointing out the countries on each that have savannas as habitats.

PLAY TIPS

- Introduce other animal types such as amphibians and invertebrates through books and picture cards.
- Plan an imaginary trip to the savanna. Using the savanna biome map, have students plan their travel route and determine how long it will take to reach the savanna of their choice. Use the globe to determine the savanna that is the shortest and longest distance from home.

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Fine Arts

Camping in the Savanna

EZ.018.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will engage in associative and cooperative play for creative expression.

An African safari is about conservation, education, and the experience of getting up close and personal with the wildest of wildlife. Students can imagine they are on a game drive, looking for the Big Five - lion, leopard, rhino, buffalo, and elephant or setting up camp right in the heart of the preserve with the right tools and equipment. Through imaginative play, children develop social skills, learn to understand others' viewpoints, expand their knowledge base, and apply what they've learned to new situations.

WHAT TO DO

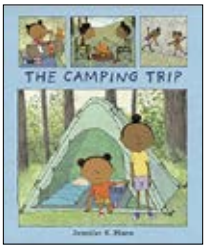
1. Initiate discussions about camping by showing photos, reading books, and using camping related vocabulary. After reading books like *The Camping Trip* by Jennifer Mann and *The Little Book of Camping* by Laurie Friedman, discuss the similarities and differences between camping in a forest (local) and camping in the savanna (wildlife, terrain, food, etc.).
2. Encourage students to explore the camping equipment and ask questions about new or unfamiliar items. Introduce the savanna field guide and ask students to find the savanna animal photos after placing them around the classroom.

PLAY TIP

Encourage students to create supportive materials for camping dramatic play. Have students make labels using word bank words, and glue paper towel rolls and tissue paper together to make a campfire.

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Fine and Gross Motor

Termite Mound Textures

EZ.018.LA.1017

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will manipulate materials for realistic representations and fine motor development.

Termites are an integral part of the ecosystem in the savanna. They are nutrient cyclers, habitat creators, and a food source for other animals. Termite mounds shape the plains around them, breaking up the flatness of the savanna. Students can create mounds using faux dirt at the Termite Mound Sensory Table and explore the behaviors of faux insects and other animals as they use the mound for shelter, burrowing, and creating dens. This sensory-rich experience helps students develop a deeper understanding of wildlife behavior and the interconnectedness of the savanna ecosystem, fostering curiosity and a greater appreciation for nature.

WHAT TO DO

1. Share books about termites like *Termites* by Martha Rustad and *Squash Woods Adventures: Termite Trouble* by Ethan Soto to build background knowledge. View termite mound images with students, sharing that some termites live in mounds (Africa) and others live in soil or dry wood. Termites in Africa build tunnels underground which allow water to better soak the soil.
2. Encourage students to create termite mounds out of play dirt and explore the variety of insects. Be sure to differentiate between the termites and other insects.

PLAY TIPS

- Observe and describe an insect's three-part body (head, thorax, and abdomen).
- Make insects out of clay or Play-Doh. Include the three-part body.

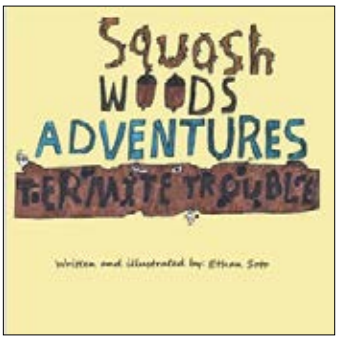
WHAT YOU'LL NEED



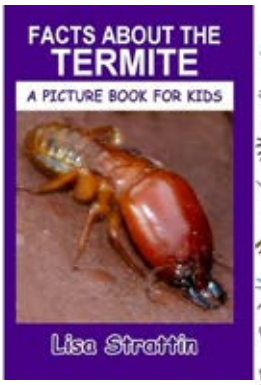














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Science

Grass Observations

EZ.018.LA.1018

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objective:
Students will describe the life cycle of plants after making predictions and observations.

Grazing animals depend on grass for food and shelter in the savanna. Students can grow a variety of different grasses in the sensory table, make daily observations and take measurements and "graze" the grass as it grows. As the grass continues to grow from the base of the stem, students can discuss the benefits to animals living in the savanna. Scientific inquiry in the preschool classroom encourages a natural curiosity, prompting students to ask questions and explore their environment. As students observe, predict, and draw conclusions, they enhance their problem-solving skills, enabling them to navigate various situations and experiences more effectively.

WHAT TO DO

1. Plan to plant and grow a variety of grass types with your students. After discussing each grass type, encourage students to choose both grass type and growing medium (soil or sponge) and give each student a labeled container with their name and grass type (after poking 2-3 holes in the bottom). Plant the grass seeds and make predictions about grass growth in soil and grass growth using just a sponge.
2. Be sure to water the grass seeds daily and make daily observations and comparisons. Encourage students to notice the differences in color, coarseness, germination time, and growth rate. Students can graze the grass (trim) as the grass grows longer and longer. Discuss the importance of grass to savanna animals like African gazelles, zebras, and wildebeest.

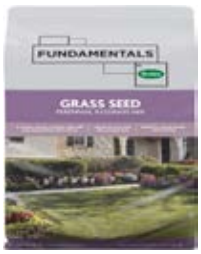
PLAY TIPS

- Take daily measurements using a ruler or measuring tape. Record growth using a class journal or class organizational chart.
- Label the parts of a grass plant on a diagram.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED









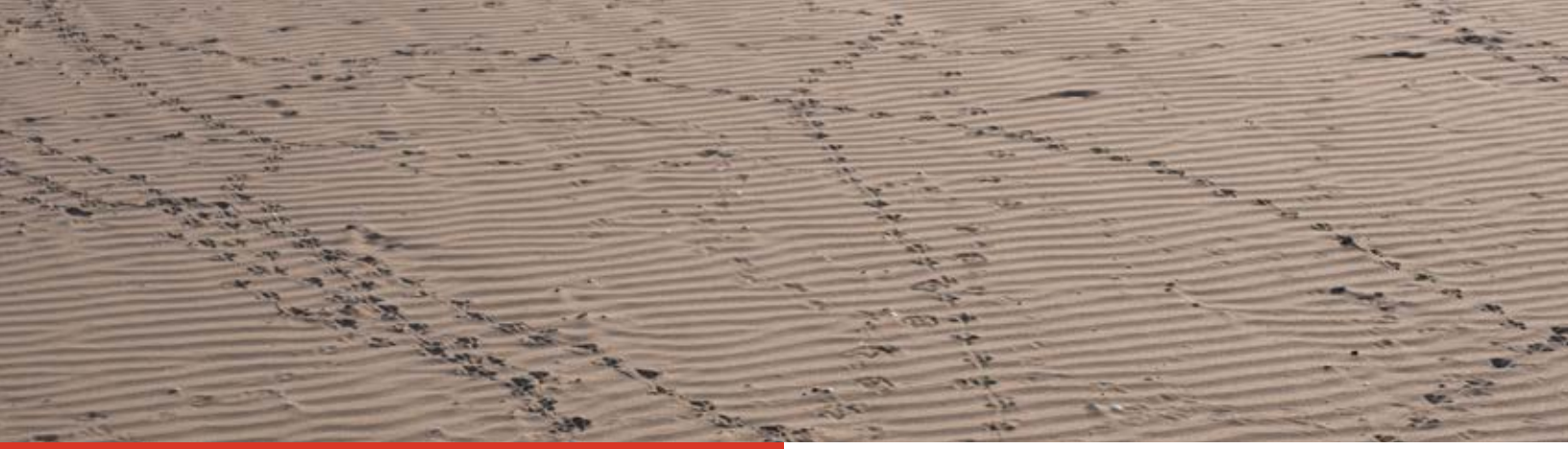






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Science

Whose Footprint?

EZ.018.LA.1019

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will make observations, conduct investigations, and describe details.

Have you ever walked through sand or mud and discovered animal tracks? Scientists can learn a great deal about an animal's size and behavior by studying its prints. Similarly, students can predict animal identities by examining tracks and creating their own using savanna animal figures, fostering critical thinking and observation skills.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students to think about animals they have seen in their neighborhood, at the zoo, or even animals that live in their home. Ask students to think about the similarities and differences between humans and animals. Read several books about animal tracks and droppings like *Whose Poop is That?* by Darrin Lunde and *Whose Track Is That?* by Stan Tekiela, discussing the features of each animal's print.
2. Have students make their own animal prints by rolling a piece of clay flat on parchment paper and imprinting an animal into the clay. Students can also use a toothpick to make imprints in the clay.

PLAY TIPS

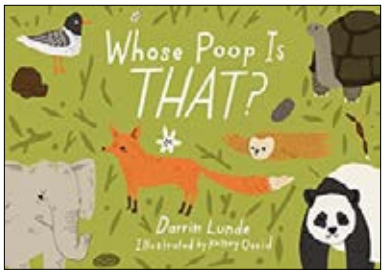
- Take a walk around the neighborhood to search for animal tracks in the mud or grass. Have students make observations and predictions about the tracks they find.
- Try making tracks in different mediums like mud, sand, faux snow, water, and dirt and make comparisons.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED













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Geography and Culture

Exploring African Culture

EZ.018.LA.1020

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will discover how people are alike and different.

After sharing books about African communities, family, and other African values from the classroom library, items like diverse cultural clothing, dolls, puppets, and other inclusive materials can be introduced to students. Through reading and playing with these cultural items, children can actively engage in learning valuable cultural and historical concepts, fostering empathy, understanding, and a deeper appreciation of diversity.

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the continent and people of Africa by reading books about or set in Africa with a focus on culture, language, and values. Read Mama Payan's Pancakes by Mary Chamberlin and Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa by Jeanette Winter from the classroom library. Discuss the setting (rural Africa), community (people), and activities (socializing at the marketplace, preserving land and culture, etc.).
2. Place the African cultural manipulatives and materials in the learning center for free exploration, pointing out the origin on a map or globe. Be sure to use appropriate terminology through language and labels and identify similarities and differences between themselves and African people.
   Clothing: Traditional Ghanaian attire such as Dashiki and Kuku as well as Nigerian outfits like Iro, Buba and Gele.
   Instruments: Bolga market baskets and various traditional musical instruments.
   Food: A variety of dishes including mishkaki (kabbab), baked plantains, peanut rounds, fish, pancakes, foo foo, and okra.

PLAY TIP

As you read books about African culture and people in the classroom, indicate book origin or setting on the world map with a check mark. Highlight geographical regions and make comparisons.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED











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Geography and Culture

Bring the Rain

EZ.018.LA.1021

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will discuss cultural customs and traditions, including their own.

Many Maasai villages in the African savanna gather to do a rain ceremony after a long, dry season. These ceremonies consist of rhythm, movement, and chants to ensure rain comes; often the king holds the power to make rain. After reading *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema, students can talk about the importance of rain to the African savanna and explore body movement and musical instruments to create rain dances of their own. Teaching young children about cultural differences broadens their perspectives and fosters greater tolerance and acceptance of others.

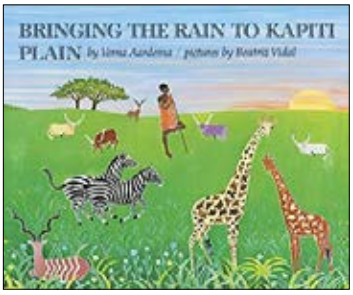
WHAT TO DO

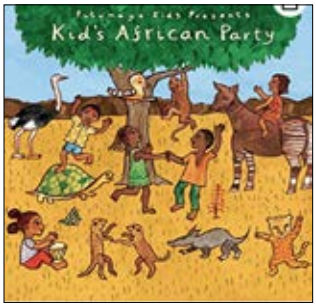
1. Introduce *Bringing the Rain to Kapti Plain* by Verna Aardema by showing the colorful cover illustrations. Picture walk through the book first and identify as many animals as possible, listing them on a whiteboard or chart. Read through the book, discussing how drought affects plants, animals, and people. Explain that modern day rain dances occur in Africa as a tradition during drought periods.
2. Encourage students to listen to African music. During or after listening to traditional music, place the instruments in a free-choice center and encourage students to play along with the music or create chants and dances of their own to share with the class.

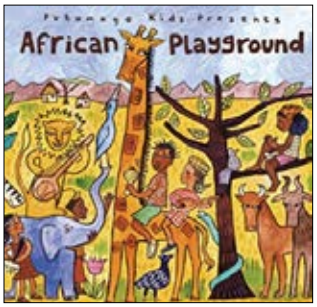
PLAY TIPS

- Guide an instrument session by encouraging students to shape their sounds. Ask “What if” questions such as, “What if you start playing your instrument very quietly and gradually get louder?” and “What if you play a long sound using your instrument followed by some short sounds?”
- Use the instruments to discuss and demonstrate patterns. You can also write out the patterns on a whiteboard or chart paper (AABB, ABAB, ABCABC).

WHAT YOU’LL NEED











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