

Science Story Adventures



Extreme Predators - The Big Cats of Africa

Learning outcomes

- » Adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival. (Grade 3 - Life Sciences)
- » Students know different animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places. (Grade 1 - Life Sciences)

From: California's Science Content Standards

Books we read

Young Lions by Toshi Yoshida

Nobody Laughs at a Lion by Paul Bright

Activities we did

- » We talked about the differences between predators and prey animals.
- » We looked at replica skulls of an African Lion, a Cheetah and a Leopard and discussed the differences and the similarities.
- » We learned about the physical characteristics and behavior of these three African big cats.

Today's craft : Making a lion mask.



You will need:

- » Paper plate
- » Yellow, orange and brown construction paper
- » Pencil
- » Scissors
- » Tongue depressor
- » Sticky tape
- » Glue

Directions:

1. Cut center out of paper plate
2. Cut yellow, orange and brown construction paper into strips of approx. 4" x 1".
3. Curl these strips: either roll round a pencil or, for tighter curls, an adult can run the strip along the blade of a pair of scissors (DO NOT attempt this without an adult present).
4. Glue the curls around the plate.
5. Tape on a tongue depressor or popsicle stick to hold the mask with.

From <http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mlionmask.htm>

Want to find out more?

Here is a selection of further resources to explore in the Naturalist Center, in the public library or at home. Please ask if you can't find what you're looking for.

Books

Big Cats by John Bonnett Wexo. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .C23 W48 1990

Lots of information and pictures about big cats form around the world, including the African big cats.

Cheetahs by Ann Squire. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .C23 S724 2005

Leopards by Ann Squire. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .C23 S73 2005
Describes the physical characteristics, habitats and behaviors of these African big cats.

How it was with Dooms: A True Story from Africa by Xan Hopcraft. Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .C23 H655 1997

Ten-year-old Xan tells about the life of Dooms, the cheetah which became his pet and lived with his family in Kenya, Africa.

Lions by Ann Elwood (Zoobook). Nat. Ctr. Juv. QL737 .C23 L56 1991

Looks at lions, their habits and habitats and includes several lion-related activities

DVDs

Big Cat Challenge Nat. Ctr. Media QL737 .C23 B53 2002
Looks at how the big cats living in South Africa's Mala Mala reserve use different skills to compete for survival.

The Endangered Wild v. 3 Cheetahs and Lions. Nat. Ctr. Media QL82 .E522 2008

Two episodes from *Nature*, one about cheetah orphans and one on the desert lions.

Kalahari Supercat Nat. Ctr. Media QL737 .C23 K3 2005

Follows the daily life of one female leopard as she raises her first litter of cubs in the challenging terrain of the Kalahari Desert.

Living with Lions Nat. Ctr. Media QL737 .C23 L58 2002
Events in the life of a pride of lions led by real-life 'Lion King' Hang Lip.

Websites

Great Cats

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/GreatCats/meetcats.cfm>

Learn more about African lions and cheetahs at the Smithsonian National Zoological park.

National Geographic Mammals

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/>

Find out more about the African big cats : facts, images and information. Search for your favorite or find out about them all.