

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum Focus:** Mammals

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

### ***Student Objectives***

- Research the similarities and differences between wolf and human societies.
- Create a chart enumerating some of these behaviors.

### ***Materials***

- Video on *unitedstreaming: Assignment Discovery: Wolves at our Door*  
Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- Social Structure of a Wolf Pack
  - Wolves: Social Structure
  - Nurturing Pups
  - Wolves Feeding
  - Pack Needs New Home
  - Wolf Families
- Wolf Habits
- Relocating a Wolf Pack
  - The Sawtooth Wolf Pack: Humans Say Farewell To Pack
- Computer with Internet access
- Library materials
- Paper, pens, marker

### ***Procedures***

1. Lead a class discussion about wolves. What have students learned about wolves and wolf behavior? Have they read books about wolves? If so, have students share what they've learned.

2. Make sure students understand that wolves are social animals that live in highly organized packs. Have students consider whether, in some important ways, wolf-pack society is similar to human society.
3. Tell students that they are going to explore ways in which the wolf pack is similar to and different than a human family or other social group.
4. Divide the class into research teams to learn about wolves. Provide students with a list of words and phrases to guide their research, including:
  - Teamwork and cooperation
  - Alpha and omega
  - Family devotion
  - Group loyalty
  - Hierarchy, or status in society
  - Child (pup) rearing
  - Sharing of wealth (food)
5. Students may use the Internet and library materials for their research. The following Web sites offer useful information.
  - <http://www.wolfcenter.org/index.html>  
The Web site of the Wolf Education and Research Center (WERC), founded by Jim Dutcher, offers a chance to renew acquaintances with the Sawtooth pack and to learn more about the wolf's role in a complete ecosystem.
  - <http://www.wolf.org>  
At this International Wolf Center Web site, click on "Learn" for wolf basics, in-depth information about predation and conservation, a gray wolves curriculum, and a Just for Kids section."

### ***Assessment***

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students actively participated in class discussions; worked cooperatively and effectively with group members; helped create a well-organized chart that reflected thorough research.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions; worked somewhat cooperatively and effectively with group members; played some role in the creation of a chart that reflected adequate research.
- **1 point:** Students did not participate in class discussions; did not work cooperatively or effectively with group members; contributed little if at all to the creation of a chart.

## Vocabulary

### alpha

*Definition:* The first letter of the Greek alphabet; the first one

*Context:* The job of maintaining pack order falls mainly to the pack alpha, or leader. In the Sawtooth pack the alpha was a male called Kamots.

### hierarchy

*Definition:* The classification of a group that is organized into orders or ranks, each subordinate to the one above it

*Context:* The other wolves held their heads and tails lower than the leader's, a sign of the strict hierarchy that maintains order within the pack.

### Nez Perce

*Definition:* A Native American people with present-day populations in western Idaho and northeast Washington

*Context:* Members of the Nez Perce befriended the explorers Lewis and Clark on their historic journey.

### omega

*Definition:* The 24th and final letter of the Greek alphabet; the end

*Context:* The pack's omega is subordinate to the rest of the pack, constantly yielding to the others.

### predator

*Definition:* An animal that lives by predation, or obtaining food by killing and consuming animals

*Context:* The wolf is the only large predator in North America dependent for survival on a cooperative social unit.

## Academic Standards

### National Academy of Sciences

The National Science Education Standards provide guidelines for teaching science as well as a coherent vision of what it means to be scientifically literate for students in grades K-12. To view the standards, visit <http://books.nap.edu>.

This lesson plan addresses the following science standards:

- Life Science: Regulation and behavior, Populations and ecosystems, Diversity and adaptations of organisms

### **Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit link:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Science – Life Sciences: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment, Understands biological evolution and the diversity of life
  - Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
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### **Support Materials**

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

