

Researching the Lemur

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: K–8

Curriculum Focus: Mammals

Lesson Duration: Three class periods

Student Objectives

- Locate Madagascar on a world map.
- Research one of species of lemurs in Madagascar.
- Develop a profile page for a lemur.
- Create a class scrapbook of lemurs.

Materials

- Discovery School video on *unitedstreaming: The Jeff Corwin Experience: Madagascar: Island Ecosystem*
Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- Conserving Lemurs
- White-Fronted Lemurs
- Lemurs of the Night

- Computer(s) with Internet access
- World map showing Madagascar (from an online or print source)
- Paper and pencils
- Colored pencils and markers

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by showing students where Madagascar is located on a world map. You can find a map online at <http://www.lemurs.us/madagascar.html>. Point out that Madagascar is the fourth largest island on Earth and is located in the Indian Ocean about 250 miles off the coast of Africa.
2. Explain to students that Madagascar has been cut off from the rest of the world for 150 million years. As a result, some unique animals have evolved there. One of these is the lemur, a primate

that is found only on the island of Madagascar. What's more, at least 30 different species now live there.

3. Tell students that they are going to have an opportunity to learn more about the lemurs of Madagascar. Working in pairs, students will select a lemur to research and then develop a profile page for a class scrapbook on lemurs.
4. Before students begin their research, you may want to show them segments 2 and 3 of *The Jeff Corwin Experience: Madagascar: Island Ecosystem*. The video provides a visually interesting and informative introduction to lemurs.
5. Have each pair select a lemur to research. If possible, try to have each pair select a different lemur. Tell students to include the following information on their profile pages:
 - What the lemur is called
 - Where the lemur lives on the island
 - What it eats
 - Whether it hunts during the day or at night
 - Physical features of the lemur
 - Its history: how long it's been on the island, how many are left, and if it is endangered
6. Give students time in class to research their lemur. In addition to the video, the following Web sites have useful information:
 - <http://www.lemurs.us/madagascar.html>
 - <http://www.stlzoo.org/wildcareinstitute/lemursinmadagascar.htm>
 - <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~rodeime/lemurs/leaping.html>
 - http://www.zoo.org/educate/fact_sheets/night/dlemur.htm
 - <http://goafrica.about.com/library/weekly/aa120700e.htm>
7. As students complete their scrapbooks pages, have them hand the pages in. Those pairs that finish early may want to draw a cover for the scrapbook.
8. Recruit students to help put the scrapbook together: write the Acknowledgments page, the Table of Contents, and the Bibliography.
9. Present the completed scrapbook to the class and make sure every student has a chance to look at it.

Assessment

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

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class and small group discussions; researched their lemur carefully and thoroughly; produced an accurate, informative, and creative scrapbook page that included all of the requested information.



- **2 points:** Students participated in class and small group discussions; researched their lemur satisfactorily; produced an adequate report that included most of the requested information.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class and small group discussions; did not complete their research of their lemur; produced an incomplete report with little or none of the requested information.

Vocabulary

chameleon

Definition: A type of lizard; both the smallest and largest chameleon species can be found in Madagascar.

Context: Chameleons are emotional creatures and show their feelings by changing color, with each color indicating a different emotion, from rage to conquest to colors for mating.

gecko

Definition: Another kind of lizard known for its ability to blend in with the environment

Context: A variety of leaf-tailed geckos live in Madagascar.

lemur

Definition: An ancient primate found only on the island of Madagascar

Context: At least 30 species of lemurs live on Madagascar, and they all look different and have different habits.

Madagascar

Definition: An island about 250 miles off the east coast of Africa

Context: Because Madagascar has been isolated from the rest of the world for so long, many different species of animals, unique to this island, have developed here.

tomato frog

Definition: A kind of frog that is red and has a plump, squishy body

Context: The tomato frog is considered to be an indicator species, meaning that it can be used to measure the health of an ecosystem.

Academic Standards

National Academy of Sciences

The National Academy of Sciences provides guidelines for teaching science in grades K-12 to promote scientific literacy. To view the standards, visit this Web site:

<http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/html/overview.html#content>.

Grades K-2

- Life Science: Organisms and environments



Grades 5-8

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

- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Gathers and uses information for research purposes
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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>

