

Title: Whose Track is That?

Objective: Match animal tracks

Time: 5 minutes

Materials Needed: Rubber track models or pictures of different animal tracks; pictures of animals whose tracks are represented

Greeting

Suggested Season: Winter

Suggested Grade Level: 2-5

Indoors or Outdoors: Indoors

Theme: Mammals

Topic: Tracks

Directions:

1. Introduce the concept that animals leave signs when they are moving through the environment. One animal sign that can be studied is tracks. Tracks and trails can tell what an animal is doing, where it's going, its size and an idea of the speed it is traveling.
2. Choose a variety of track models or pictures and divide them into two groups, right/left foot or front/back foot. Give each student a different track. Encourage students to study the tracks and look for clues that might identify what kind of animal it is from.
3. On a given signal, have students wander around and find the person that has the other foot to match the track.
4. Have partners sit together and discuss their track.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who do you think made the track you have? What clues are you using to decide?
2. What are some other signs that an animal would leave behind?

Standards Addressed:

Science: 0.4.1.1.1.; 1.4.1.1.1.; 3.4.1.1.2.

Language Arts : K.I.B. ; K.II.B. ; K.III.A. ; 1.III.A. ; 1.III.B.1. ; 2.III.A. 3.III.A.2.; 3.III.A.3. ; 5.I.B.; 5.III.A.1. ; 5.III.A.2. ; 5.III.A.4.

Math:

Social Studies:

Background Information:

- Animals leave different trails depending on what kind of animal it is.
- Animals that are hoppers tend to have short legs, large thighs and round bodies. This includes rabbits, squirrels, mice and shrews. When they hop their two front feet appear next to or on top of each other behind the larger front feet.
- Perfect Walkers have long legs and sleek bodies. Their tracks and trails tend to be in a line. Their hind foot often lands where their front foot stepped. This includes deer, fox, coyotes and humans.
- Waddlers tend to have short legs and round bodies. This includes skunk, beaver, raccoon and opossum. Their feet land side by side rather than on top of each other.
- Bounders tend to have short legs and long, sleek bodies. Their back feet land where their front feet stepped as they are bounding. Weasels and river otters are in this group.

Some hints for identifying tracks are:

- Know the habitat. Know what animals live in the place you are looking and could possibly be out leaving tracks.
- Narrow the possibilities by looking first at the type of walker. Then decide, based on the size of the track, what animal was present.
- Look for other signs to help identify an animal track including scat, eat marks, food cache, or territory markings.

Additional Resources:

- *Tracks in the Wild* by Betsy Bowen
- *Animal Tracks of Minnesota and Wisconsin* by Ian Sheldon and Tamara Eder

Correlates with:

Activity – Walk this Way

News and Announcements – Tracks are Everywhere