Lions, Tigers, and Leopards – Oh, My!

Curricular Areas: Language Arts, Science, Art, Social Studies

Grade Level: First Grade

Time Frame: Three weeks (15 days)

Goals:
Students will:
1. Understand the difference between big cats and domestic cats.
2. Recognize different species of big cats.
3. Recognize different sounds big cats make (and understand the related distinction between greater and lesser cats).
4. Learn where wild cats live and what they eat.
5. Recognize elements that make up the folk tale genre.
6. Have an understanding of the food chain.
7. Be familiar with the concept of endangered species as it relates to big cats and other animals.

Objectives
Students will:
1. Write three sentences in their journal about big cats using correct capitalization and punctuation and draw a picture of a big cat of their choice.
2. Create paper bag puppets of three different wild cats (lion, tiger, leopard) that show the difference in their markings.
3. Be able to name four continents in the world where wild cats are found with 100% accuracy.
4. After listening to folk tales and fables about wild cats, be able to answer questions about the two genres with 100% accuracy.
5. Create and color a booklet that shows the four Panthera cats in their natural habitats.
6. After discussing the endangered status of many big cats, students will write letters, which will include an illustration and one complete sentence, to support National Geographic’s “Letters to Lions” campaign.

Vocabulary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th>Greater Cat</th>
<th>Plains</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predator</td>
<td>Mane</td>
<td>Lesser Cat</td>
<td>Wild Animal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prey</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Feline</td>
<td>Continent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Solitary</td>
<td>Pounce</td>
<td>Species</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growl</td>
<td>Purr</td>
<td>Savanna</td>
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</tbody>
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Teaching/Learning Activities:
1. The teacher reads a trade book or children’s book about big cats in conjunction with each activity.
2. The teacher shares a PowerPoint presentation that includes pictures of big cats and their babies.
3. Students watch a video about domestic cats and big cats.
4. Students create illustrations that show the similarities and differences between big cats and domestic cats.
5. Students write characteristics of big cats in their journals.
6. Students create a booklet of four *Panthera* cats that includes their name and habitat.
7. Students watch a video about endangered cats.
8. Students each write a “letter to [a] lion” to support National Geographic’s efforts to protect the species.
9. Students listen to sounds of wild cats roaring and purring.
10. In groups, students create a full cycle of the food chain in an illustrated form.

Evaluation/Assessment:
- Observation
- Big cat booklet
- Letter to a Lion
- Big cat puppets
- Journal review

Project Materials:
- Pencils and lined paper
- Manila construction paper
- Books
- Crayons
- Paper sacks
- Worksheets (to color and label for booklet)
- Brads (to connect “tails” to booklets)
- Large world map
- Computer and Promethean Board (for PowerPoint presentations and videos)
- Writing Journals
- Permission slips for “Letter to a Lion” campaign
- Audio recording of different wild cats

Resources:
- Books:
  - *Big Cat, Little Kitty* by Scotti Cohn
  - *Big Cats* by Seymour Simon
  - *Why Do Tigers Have Stripes?* Mike Unwin
  - *If I Were a Lion* by Sarah Weeks
  - *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudson
  - *The Lion and the Little Red Bird* Elisa Klevin
Lesson Plan

Title: Big Cat, Little Cat
Curricular Areas: Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies
Grade Level: First Grade
Time Frame: Week One

Objectives:

- As a class, students will identify at least three similarities and three differences between big cats and domestic cats.

- After reviewing these similarities and differences, each student will draw a picture of a big cat and of a little cat that highlights one particular characteristic of the animals’ physical appearance of behavior. Students will be able to tell if the characteristic is the same or different in big cats as it is in little cats.

- Using correct capitalization and punctuation, each student will write three complete sentences about a big cat and draw a corresponding picture.

TEKS:

Language Arts 110.12.b

(4) Reading/Beginning Reading/Strategies. Students comprehend a variety of texts drawing on useful strategies as needed.
(7) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

(10) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Literary Nonfiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction and respond by providing evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to determine whether a story is true or a fantasy and explain why.

(17) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

(21) Oral and Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation. Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions.

Science, 112.2.b
(9) Organisms and environments. The student knows that the living environment is composed of relationships between organisms and the life cycles that occur.

(10) Organisms and environments. The student knows that organisms resemble their parents and have structures and processes that help them survive within their environments.

Social Studies, 113.3.b
(5) Geography. The student understands the purpose of maps and globes.

(6) Geography. The student understands various physical and human characteristics of the environment.

Art, 117.5 b
(2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill.

Context/Modifications:
○ Prior Knowledge:
  • Students should have a familiarity with domestic cats.

○ Modifications for students with special needs:
  • Extra assistance will be provided for students, as needed, from teacher, aids, or classmates.
  • Photographs will be used whenever possible to help define new words and concepts to accommodate English language learners.
  • Spanish-language equivalents will be used if needed to define new words for English language learners.
  • Additional time will be provided for student projects, including the puppet project and the big cat booklet.
  • Seating arrangements will be altered when necessary.
Anticipatory Focusing:
- While the students are sitting at the rug, I will tell them about my past cats, Colin and Daisy, and show them some pictures on the promethean board.
- The teacher will ask the students if any of them have pet cats. If they do, the teacher will ask the students share information about their pet cats – what do they look like? How do they act? When do they sleep? Etc.
- After students have shared their experiences with domestic cats, the teacher will bring up a picture of a tiger and ask students if they would keep this cat as a pet. The teacher will then introduce the concept of “big cats” in the wild and have students name any that they are familiar with.

Setting Expectations:
The teacher will explain to the students that they will be starting a unit on big cats, or cats that are found in the wild. For this particular activity, students will learn the difference between the domestic cats we see each day and their larger relatives in the wild.

Input:
- The teacher will read *Big Cat, Little Kitty* by Scotti Cohn
- After briefly discussing the book, the teacher will play a YouTube video that compares big cats and domestic cats: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQzEvYMHBOg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQzEvYMHBOg)

Modeling:
- With the help of the class, the teacher will create a Venn diagram of the similarities and differences between big cats and domestic.
- The teacher will explain the next activity. On a piece of construction paper, each student will draw a t-chart that looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Big Cat</th>
<th>Pet Cat</th>
<th>S / D?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Big Cat Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Pet Cat Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each student will draw a picture of each animal to represent the characteristic of their choice (students can choose between the following: habitat, behavior, size, color, etc.). The student should then mark whether that characteristic is the same or different between big and domestic cats. The students will then discuss their illustrations with the group and choose a group member’s illustration to present to the rest of the class.

The teacher will model this activity by choosing one characteristic and drawing the pictures to represent it.

**Checking for Understanding:**
Teacher will monitor all activities by circulating around the room observing student’s work.

**Reteach:**
After sharing their work with group members, selected students will share their illustrations with the class. The teacher will guide students through a corresponding discussion that emphasizes the distinguishing characteristics of big cats.

**Independent Practice:**
In their writing journal, students will write three complete sentences to describe big cats in the wild. The student will also draw a picture of a big cat.

**Checking for Mastery:**
Each student will bring his/her journal to the teacher for the teacher’s review.

**Extension:**
- Students are encouraged to observe their cat or a friend’s cat and compare that cat to the big cats we are learning about in class.
- As a class, students can visit the Fort Worth zoo to see big cats. The instructor can take pictures of different cats to compare in class.
- Students use a unit of measure (a foot-long paw print provided by the instructor) to estimate the sizes of different cats, big and small, and compare them.

**Closure:**
The teacher will invite students to the rug and share some pictures of big cats on the promethean board for the students to enjoy.

**Reflective Critique:**
- Were the students engaged with *Big Cat, Little Kitty*?
- Did the students enjoy the lesson?
- Did the students have enough time to complete their illustrations and journal entries?
- Did the use of technology enhance students’ understanding of big cats?
- Do I need further modifications for students with special needs?
- Did I include the

Integration of Technology:
- YouTube Video