

# **An Animal Encounter**

A Lesson in Non-Fiction Text  
(with a focus in science)

## **Developed by:**

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## **Discipline / Subject:**

**Language Arts— Reading Non-Fiction Text**  
**Science— Life Cycle and Traits**

## **Topic:**

Reading and understanding non-fiction text articles which relate to animal life cycles, traits, and habitats.

## **Grade Level:**

Intermediate Grades—3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>

## **Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**

### **Jr. Brain Pop/Brain Pop--**

<https://jr.brainpop.com/readingandwriting/readingskills/readingnonfiction/>  
<https://www.brainpop.com/english/studyandreadingskills/readingskills/>

### **Excerpt from *Woodson* by Gary Paulsen**

**3 Articles—moose, bear, and porcupine**

**3 Non-fictions notes handouts**

**3 Circles with the animals names on top**

**Glue Sticks**

**Hole Puncher**

**String**

**Venn Diagram**

## Lesson Summary

In this lesson students will read three non-fiction articles about animals that mushers may encounter along the Iditarod trail or while training for the Iditarod. Students will summarize the information from the articles to create a mobile of their information.

## Standards Addressed: Common Core State Standards

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.4

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

## Learning Objectives:

1. Students will practice their fluency while reading non-fiction texts.
2. Students will confirm their understanding of informational text by asking and answering questions about key details.
3. Students will summarize the informational text, including only main ideas.
4. Students will compare and contrast the three animals.

## Assessment:

Students will read and summarize their final article, All About Moose, on their own. The summary and informational text graphic organizer will serve as an assessment for the lesson.

Students will also compare and contrast the traits of the three animals using a Venn diagram.

## **Procedural Activities**

### **Day 1:**

1. Begin by reading a section of Gary Paulsen's *Woodson* to the students. This section of the book gives students a firsthand account of encountering wild animals while traveling down the Iditarod trail.
2. Explain to students that they will be learning about three animals and their habitats. Before you begin to read watch one of the Brain Pop videos. There are two options (see links above). After watching the video(s) have a class discussion about different text features and best practices when reading the articles.
3. Pass out the first article, *The Great Bison*, and read as a whole group. To have students work on fluency have them turn to a neighbor and reread the article 1-2 more times. Once students complete the partner reading, come back together as a whole group.
4. As a class fill out one of the non-fiction notes handouts (there are three options—you can use all three, or keep your lesson consistent and use only one).
5. Once you have completed the notes as a whole class, summarize the information from the article (using the notes handout to help) on the circle titled bison. Guide students in their writing and write the summary on the front board.
6. To finish the class period have students draw and color a bison on the top portion of their circle.

### **Day 2:**

1. Remind students of what they learned yesterday. Review text-features of non-fiction books/articles and best practices for reading informational text.
2. Have students work with partners to complete the second article about bears. Students should read the article 2-3 times to work on fluency. Once they have finished the article students may complete the non-fiction notes handout.
3. Next, go over the notes as a class to make sure students have accurate information recorded on their handouts.

4. Finally, have students summarize the information they gather onto their bear circle. Student may finish this activity for homework if time does not allow them to finish during the class period.

### **Day 3:**

1. Remind students of what they have been working on—reading and understanding non-fiction texts. Today students will work on their own.
2. Pass out the All About Moose handout. Explain to students that they should read it through 2-3 times in order to fully understand the information. Then, students should fill out the last non-fiction notes handout with information they have learned about moose.
3. Once students have read the article and completed the notes they may fill out their moose circle.
4. Now that all the circles have been completed students may glue them together. Cut out each circle and fold them in half right down the center. Place glue (I've found that glue stick works best) on one side of the folded circle and place it onto another folded circle (making sure everything is facing the correct way). Continue to glue the sides together until all three sides are together and a mobile is formed. Then, punch a hole in the top and add string so you can hang them up around the classroom.
5. Students should turn in the moose notes handout as an assessment. You can also assess students by using the summary on their moose circle.
6. As a final assessment students can fill out the triple Venn diagram which will compare and contrast the three animals.

### **Materials Students Need:**

- 3 Articles—moose, bear, and bison**
- 3 Non-fiction notes handouts**
- 3 Circles with the animals names on top**
- Glue Sticks**
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils**
- Venn diagram handout**

**Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:****Brain Pop**

\*Teachers can also have students find additional information on websites such as National Geographic, San Diego Zoo, and Nature Works.

**Other Information:****This lesson can also be linked to science standards:**

3-LS3-1. Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variation of these traits exists in a group of similar organisms.

3-LS3-2. Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment.

**An additional resource for teachers to use to teach text features:**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/nonfiction/nonFictionTools.pdf>

**Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:**

1. Teachers can complete all three articles together, rather than in small group or individually.
2. For struggling learners the Venn diagram could compare only two of the animals.