



Virtual Field Trip



THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS

Welcome to the Northern Great Plains! Join us on this [virtual field trip](#) as we explore the sights and sounds of this amazing ecosystem. We'll travel across the grassland to learn about the abundant wildlife, plants, and people that make this region unique and so important to the entire North American continent. As we finish our trip, we'll discover what threats this landscape faces and how you can help protect it for generations to come.

Before the Field Trip

Prepare for the field trip by completing the following warm-up exercises:

DEFINE

Connect the dot from each science vocabulary word to its correct definition.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Grassland | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Organisms that eat other organisms for energy |
| Ecosystem | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> The living and nonliving things in an area that interact with each other in an interconnected way |
| Biodiversity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Organisms that break down dead organic matter |
| Pollination | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> The transfer of pollen from male plant parts to female plant parts to fertilize |
| Producer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> An animal that frequently nibbles on grass, such as bison and pronghorn |
| Consumer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> Organisms that make their food by using sunlight, such as plants |
| Grazer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> A landscape that has too little rain for many trees to grow and instead has grass and grasslike plants that grow close to the soil |
| Decomposer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> All the different kinds of life found in one area, including animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, and genetic material |

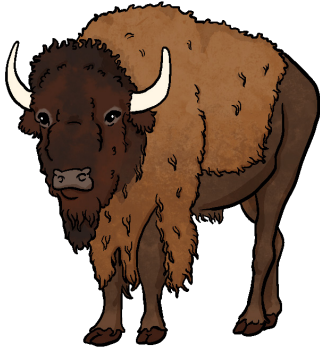




WILD CLASSROOM

IDENTIFY

In grasslands, every organism plays a valuable role in keeping the ecosystem healthy. From grazers shaping the growth of grass to predators keeping other populations in check, one organism's role is just as important as another's. Label the following organisms as either **producer**, **pollinator**, **grazer**, **predator**, or **decomposer**. You may use a word more than once.



















COMPARE

The Northern Great Plains was once a nearly continuous sea of grasses and wildflowers. However, the demand for food has caused these nutrient-rich lands to be plowed for crops. View the images below of an intact grassland and a grassland that has been converted for agricultural use, then, on the next page, compare the two landscapes by circling which one would have a greater amount of each thing listed in the table.



Which has More ...? (circle one)	
Biodiversity	Intact grassland or Agricultural land
Food for wildlife	Intact grassland or Agricultural land
Pollinators	Intact grassland or Agricultural land
Space for wildlife to roam	Intact grassland or Agricultural land
Pesticides and herbicides	Intact grassland or Agricultural land
Healthy Soil	Intact grassland or Agricultural land



WILD CLASSROOM

REFLECT

Before the field trip, answer these questions:



What do I want to know
about grasslands?

What do I want to find out?

What am I excited to see?

After the Field Trip

After the field trip, reflect on your responses above and answer these questions:

What did I learn?

What do I want to know
more about?

What was my favorite
part of the trip?



WILD CLASSROOM

RESEARCH

Make your own field guide entry!

A field guide is a book that is designed to help people identify organisms such as plants and animals when they are out in nature. Imagine that you are helping to create a field guide for your county/region. Select a plant or animal that is common to your area and research its characteristics to fill out the field guide entry below.

Animal or plant name: _____

Scientific name: _____

Appearance (draw a sketch):

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a hand-drawn sketch of the organism being researched.

Description (describe what it looks like): _____

Range (describe where it lives): _____

Diet: _____

Circle the role(s) your plant or animal plays in its ecosystem:

Predator

Grazer

Consumer

Prey

Pollinator

Decomposer

Producer



WILD CLASSROOM

Based on your organism's role, name another organism with which it would interact or have a relationship. How would you describe the relationship that the two have with one another (e.g., predator/prey, consumer/producer)? _____

Is your organism threatened or endangered? What threats does it face? _____

What will you do to help this species and its habitat thrive? _____

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Now that you've virtually traveled to the Northern Great Plains, it's time to spread the word about all that you've learned regarding the importance of these grasslands. Design a postcard that you could send to a friend or family member to convince them to appreciate or visit the Northern Great Plains (see template on the next page).

On the front, use your creativity to make a design of your favorite part of the Northern Great Plains, what's important about it, or why others should care for it.

On the back, write a short letter using the information you learned on the trip to convince a friend or family member to care about the Northern Great Plains (e.g., its unique wildlife, its connection to our food systems, its meaning to the local communities).

Cut around the edges of your card and fold it along the middle line to complete your postcard. Use tape or glue to join the two halves together.

Bonus Challenge Share the information in your postcard with five people!



Education materials developed in collaboration with HHMI Tangled Bank Studios and Air Wick in support of the [One Square Foot initiative](#) and the PBS documentary [My Garden of a Thousand Bees](#).



FRONT

BACK



FOLD ALONG THIS LINE

