

Yvonne Palka

Who Owns These Footprints?

Goals

Develop careful observation skills.

Foster imagination.

Work on critical thinking skills.

Basis

Story about a creature, not necessarily a beach animal, whose footprints tell a story. This could be a true life science book or a fictional picture book. Suggestions include:

Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints, Selsam

Whose Footprint is That? (Animal Detectives), Brown

Encyclopedia of Animals, DK Publishing

Tracks in the Snow, Yee

Whose Footprints, Yabuuchi

Encourage student participation during reading by stopping frequently and asking why they think a footprint is shaped or sized a certain way. For example, a bear's paw must carry a lot of weight; a heron's foot doesn't have webbing because it doesn't swim. After discussing a few examples encourage students to speculate about other prints, guiding them with appropriate questions, such as: how big do you think the animal is who has these prints? Does this print show claws or toes? Why would this animal need toes but not claws?

Crafts/Activities

Using construction paper, have students recreate the footprints of their favorite wild animal. Begin by drawing, then cutting, and finish by asking the student to draw a picture of their animal. Attach the prints on the corner of the drawing.

Do the same thing, except this time ask the students to imagine a new animal, one no one has yet seen. Is it a reptile, whose stomach leaves a print along with footprints? Is it a winged creature, large but very light, with long three long skinny toes? This time ask students to write a brief description, and encourage detail: large eyes for seeing at night, dense soft fur for icy winters, or big ears for hearing at great distances. Attach the prints to the written description.

