

People on the Prairie



Introduction

In "The Prairie that Nature Built", the readers are introduced to a place where many different groups of people lived over different periods of time. They have changed the prairies and the prairies have changed them. The end of the book is a child talking about loving this prairie – this child could be a Native American or First Nations girl or boy, an immigrant sodbuster girl or boy, or a rancher's or farmer's child at the turn of the Century or the Dust Bowl.

Materials Needed

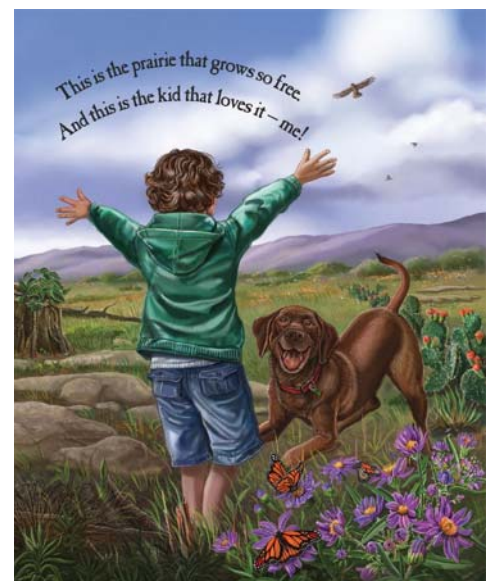
- ◆ A copy of the book
- ◆ A map of the United States or Canada with prairies in it.
- ◆ A national history book or historical resources

Key Concepts Common Core Standards (ELA 3-5)

- ◆ Writing: Text Types and Purposes 3.3, 3.7, 4.3, 4.7, 5.3, 5.7

Procedure

1. Read the book and talk about the different time periods of a prairie.
2. Set up four time zones in the classroom: 1800s to 1850s; 1850s to 1900 (including American Civil War); 1900 to 1930s; 1930s to 1940s, and let students choose a time zone or be assigned to one.
3. If students have ancestors who lived on the prairies in a time zone, have them choose to be a boy or girl in that family. Or they can be assigned a type of person from one of the categories so that there are all categories and time zones covered: Native American, Immigrant, Farmer or Rancher – dividing up. Each must then choose a specific nationality (specific tribe, country they came from, background.). (Make sure there are Native Americans in each time period to show they didn't go away and non-immigrant Hispanic Americans in what was once Mexico!)
4. As a class and as individuals, research the people's history of the prairie.
5. Have each student figure out some of the food that people got from the prairie and how.
6. Have each student write two daily logs about the things done in a day on the prairie – one in winter, one in summer – in that time period. Imagine what would school be like? Chores? Fun? Food? Clothing?
7. Have everyone dress up like their character, with a name tag and historical period. Have a history pageant going through the different times, with everyone telling a little about their days.



Who Am I and Where Do I Live?



Additional Resources

- ◆ You can read: *A Prairie Boy's Summer* and *A Prairie Boy's Winter* by William Kurelek *Prairie Day* by Laura Ingalls Wilder; *Renee Graef*; *Prairie School* by Lois Lenski; *Prairie School* by Avi, Bill Farnsworth; *The Star People: A Lakota Story* by S.D. Nelson and others.
- ◆ The Smithsonian's *Connor Prairie Interactive History Park* in Indiana has materials about a Lenape Indian Village (<http://www.connerprairie.org/Teachers/Classroom-Resources/Lenape-Camp.aspx>); an 1836 prairie town (*Who would you be?* <http://www.connerprairie.org/Plan-Your-Visit/1836-Prairietown/Who-Would-You-Be-in-Prairietown.aspx>), a Civil War interactive adventure -- : (<http://civilwar.connerprairie.org/>), a prairie homestead video and materials (<http://www.connerprairie.org/Teachers/Pre-Visit-Info-and-Forms/Orientation-Presentation.aspx>)
- ◆ Other grasslands Living History Centers: the Living History Farms in Iowa (<http://www.lhf.org/>); the Wessels farm in Nebraska: <http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/>; The Eidem Homestead in Minnesota (<http://www.brooklynpark.org/city-government/recreation-and-parks/eidem-homestead/>) and Gibbs Museum of Pioneer and Dakota Life in St. Paul, MN (<http://www.rchs.com/gbbsfm2.htm>); a pioneer town in Arizona: <http://www.pioneeraz.org/>; El Rancho de Los Golondrinos in Santa Fe, NM: <http://www.golondrinas.org/>; McFarland Ranch in Galt, CA (<http://mcfarlandranch.org/education.htm>); in Doris Ranch in Willamette Valley, OR (<http://www.willamalane.org/pages/parks/dorris.shtml>)

Download a FREE



**Prairie That Nature Built
3D Pop-up App!**

**Watch the characters pop up and
move as you listen to the story
being read aloud! For iPad,
iPhone and Android devices.**