



# Wild Stories

Animal Communication; Habitats; Storytelling

Time Frame: 3-4 hours

Grade: 3-6

## Overview:

Many people have seen wild animals in pictures or on the television, and if they are lucky, they have had the chance to hear their calls. For others, the sights and sounds of the wild are a mystery, contained only in the pages of books and the Internet. In this lesson, students will help teach younger students about a few common wildlife species by using standard computer software to write a children’s book equipped with animal sounds.

**Author:** Melissa Steinman

### Essential Questions

- What are the elements of an effective children’s book?
- How do we communicate science to a young audience?
- How do Arizona wildlife interact within a shared habitat?

### Objectives

- Identify common Arizona wildlife species.
- Observe and compare characteristics of different animals.
- Write and present a children’s book focused on Arizona wildlife.

### Arizona Department of Education Standards

<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</i>		<i>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</i>	
<i>ELA Common Core</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>ELA Common Core</i>	<i>Science</i>
○ W.3.2	○ S4.C3.PO1	○ W.3.2	○ S4.C4.PO2
○ W.3.4a	○ S4.C4.PO1	○ W.3.4a	
○ W.3.5		○ W.3.5	<i>Technology</i>
○ W.3.6	<i>Technology</i>	○ W.3.6	○ S1.C4.PO1
○ W.3.8	○ S1.C4.PO1	○ W.3.8	○ S6.C2.PO5
	○ S6.C2.PO5		
<i>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</i>		<i>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</i>	
<i>ELA Common Core</i>	<i>Technology</i>	<i>ELA Common Core</i>	<i>Technology</i>
○ W.3.2	○ S1.C4.PO1	○ W.3.2	○ S1.C4.PO1
○ W.3.4a	○ S6.C2.PO5	○ W.3.4a	○ S6.C2.PO5
○ W.3.5		○ W.3.5	
○ W.3.6		○ W.3.6	
○ W.3.8			



### Materials and Resources

- Access to computers or laptops
  - AZGFD bone box resource trunk
- *Animal Facts Worksheet* (one per student)
- Optional example of children’s books.  
These could include:
  - *Where do I sleep?* By Jennifer Blomgren
  - *Sounds of the Wild: Nighttime* by Maurice Pledger

### Teacher Preparation

- Copy the *Animal Facts Worksheet*.
- Set up stations around the classroom, one for each animal in the bone box. Stations should include the pelt, the skull, a copy of the fact sheet from the Bone Box Resource Trunk Teacher’s Guide, and a computer or laptop.
- Prepare the computers. Each computer should have images and wildlife sounds for the different animals. These can be copied from the Bone Box Resource DVD or downloaded from <http://www.azgfd.gov/bonebox>.

### Background Information:

In this lesson students will research local Arizona wildlife and use this information to write and create a children’s book. Using readily available presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, students will embed animal sounds into their book to make it more engaging. This will help build and reinforce important technology and literacy skills.

Many teachers realize that one of the best ways to show that you understand a concept is to teach it to someone else. Having students share their knowledge through a unique creative product can be an extremely effective learning tool. In addition, students are often more engaged and motivated if they know that their work will be seen by others. When they are finished, students will have the opportunity to share their books with younger children. If done correctly, the books the children write should correlate with kindergarten and first grade science standards. This includes identifying some local wildlife and comparing habitats. As a result, the books will be meaningful and tie in with the curriculum.

This lesson asks students to use computers and presentation software to create a children’s

book that include animal sounds. If you do not have access to traditional presentation software (such as Microsoft PowerPoint), the Internet provides numerous free alternatives. Two of the most common are Google Docs and Prezi.

Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>) allows users to create different types of documents, including spreadsheets and presentations. These documents are created and stored online, so they are accessible anywhere in the world. They can also be shared so multiple users can collaborate on a single document. A Google account is required and can be acquired for free.

Prezi (<http://prezi.com>) is another free web-based presentation tool that offers some unique features. Some of these features may make this option a little too complicated for younger audiences. Like Google Docs, it can be accessed anywhere and a free account is required.

### Procedures:

1. List the names of the animals from the Bone Box Resource Trunk on the board. Explain to the students that all of the animals in the bone box are native to Arizona. This means

that their natural habitat exists somewhere in our state.

2. Explain that even though these animals are common, many people will never see them. The only way they may experience these animals, and learn about them, is through books. As a result, it is extremely important that animal books be accurate. Unfortunately, most of these books are written for adults.
3. Inform students that they are being challenged to write a children's book that includes information for at least three of these animals. The book will be written for either kindergarten or first grade students. In addition to written information about each animal, the book will also include pictures and sounds.
4. Divide the students into small groups of three to four students. Let them know that they will not have to write the book by themselves.
5. Explain that authors have to do research before they write a book. This ensures that the information is accurate. Point out the stations set up around the room. Each station includes information about one of the animals from the bone box. In addition, there is a fact sheet, pelt, skull, and a computer with pictures and sounds of the animal. They will have the opportunity to visit 4-6 stations to learn as much about the animals as they can before writing their book.
6. Hand out the *Animal Facts Worksheet*. Instruct them to answer as many questions as they can about each animal they visit.
7. Remind the students that they will not see all of the animals. They must be selective about which animals they want to see. They will use at least three of their chosen animals in their book.

8. Give the students time to rotate through the stations and complete the *Animal Facts Worksheet*.
9. Gather the class back together. Ask the groups if they discovered anything about the animals that surprised them. Hold a brief discussion about the information they learned.
10. Inform the students that children's books are usually short, include large pictures and have one or two sentences on each page. The words should be written with the audience in mind. So, they should not include any big words that kindergarten or first grade students would not understand. If you wish, read some example picture books, or allow students to explore some books on their own.
11. Have the students begin planning their book. They should choose the three animals they will use and brainstorm ideas for a story theme. Examples include:
  - a. Where do I sleep?
  - b. Where do I live?
  - c. Who lives near me?
  - d. Am I awake during the day or the night?
12. Give students time to write a rough draft. They should not worry about pictures or sounds at this point, just the words and story.
13. When students are finished, have them share their rough drafts with other groups or turn them in to you for comments.
14. With feedback from you or their peers, have the students edit their story. At this point, they should begin to look at illustrations. They can include photographs (like the ones included on the Bone Box Resource DVD and available at <http://www.azgfd.gov/bonebox>) or attempt to draw their own pictures.

15. Inform the students that the final draft of their stories will actual be written on the computer using Microsoft PowerPoint (or another presentation software of your choice). This will allow them to easily add their pictures and include sounds of the animals. Each page of the book should be a new slide.
16. Give the students time to write their “book” using the appropriate software. Student-drawn illustrations can be scanned and inserted into the slides. Photographs and animals sounds can be downloaded from

the Internet or copied from the Bone Box Resource DVD.

17. Before completing the books, remind students to make sure that their names as well as the intended audience (kindergarten or first grade) is written on the front cover (i.e., first slide) of the “book.”
18. Present the books in class. If possible, make arrangements have your students read their “books” to a lower level class. This will make the work more powerful for your students.

#### **Differentiated Instruction:**

##### *Extensions:*

- Have the students create a video podcast of their book with narration and animal sounds.
- Have the student create a short movie script using the presentation slides as the story board and animal sounds that will be included in the movie.

##### *Modifications:*

- Allow students to work individually or in groups on their books.
- Provide the students with children’s books about animals and have them add sounds where appropriate.
- Have students create a picture book with few, if any, written words much like author David Weisner modeled in books like *Tuesday* and *Flotsam*. Students can then tell their story rather than write it.
- Have students create their books on paper rather than using computers.

#### **Reflection:**

Use the space below to reflect on the success of the lesson. What worked? What didn’t? What changes would you make? These notes can be used to help the next time you teach the lesson. In addition, the Department would appreciate any feedback. Please send your comments to [focuswild@azgfd.gov](mailto:focuswild@azgfd.gov). We’d love to see student samples of the books, as well!



# Animal Facts Worksheet

Follow the directions provided by your teacher to study some common Arizona animals. Complete this sheet as you learn. Use one column for each animal. Space for additional animals can be found on the back. Do not forget to answer the questions at the end.

Animal Name:			
What colors do you see in the animal's fur?			
Would you describe the fur as soft, prickly, rough, long, short, or thick?			
What does this animal like to eat?			
Are the teeth sharp, flat, or both?			
Does this animal come out during the day or the night?			
Do the eyes appear to be big or small?			
Are the eyes located in the front of the head, on the side, or on the top?			
What type of habitat does it live in?			
What other animals live in the same types of habitat?			
Use words to describe its sound.			
Other interesting facts you learned:			

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Other interesting facts you learned:			

Of the animals you observed, which ones would you like to include in your book?

What will be the theme of your book?