



GRASS SAFARI

Observation of grassy areas



GRADES 3-6

MATERIALS

- grassy field or area

KEY WORDS

- grass
- grassland
- tussocks
- seeds
- ecosystem

STANDARDS

- SCI.3.3.1
- SCI.4.3.3
- SCI.4.3.4
- SCI.6.3.2
- SCI.6.3.3

OBJECTIVES

- Students will make observations about a grassy area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Grasslands cover about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Earth's surface and are specialized ecosystems.
- Grasses are 70% of all cultivated crops.
- Seeds grow in a cluster at the top of the plant on grasses.
- Clumps of grass are called *tussocks*. Most of the grasses on the African savannah grow in tussocks.

PROCEDURE

- Go on a grass safari. (Avoid areas that could contain ticks, poison ivy, or other hazards).
- Ask students to respond to the following questions:
 - Are all the grasses the same height?
 - Has the area been mowed recently? How can you tell?
 - Do you see any seed heads?
 - Do you see any grass growing in clumps (tussocks)?
- Look for signs of animal life among the grasses.

EXTENSIONS

- Read books about insects and grass dwellers. Follow up by visiting a grassy field or meadow and have students collect insects in a bug cage made from a plastic cup covered with fabric netting held with a rubber band.
- Have some fun and show your students how to make a grass whistle. Stretch a sturdy blade of grass (at least three inches long) between your thumbs and blow gently. As students practice, suggest they adjust the tension to get different sounds.

