THE COUGAR FUND
Protecting America's Greatest Cat

A Message from The Cougar Fund:

We are very excited to present you with ***Discover: Predators***, a unique and engaging series of activities created by **The Cougar Fund** designed to teach children about predators. You do not need to be a formally trained teacher nor a predator expert to run these activities. All that you need is some enthusiasm and time to prepare and conduct each activity. The idea behind this program is to encourage students to enjoy the information and to pursue their curiosity further.

Each unit is designed to be adaptable to your time and resource availability. Individual units will take about half an hour to an hour+ depending on facilitation. The ideal group size is 8+ for most of the games. All units can be enhanced with visuals like skulls or pelts (check with your local Game & Fish or other wildlife management organizations/educational centers). Images of the animals highlighted in each unit as well as the habitat they live in are also useful visuals. You may request a .zip file of images from The Cougar Fund or find your own. Additionally, internet access and a computer/projector will enhance the Predator of the Day lessons.

Each lesson should not be a task for the children, but rather a fun, thought-provoking activity. Give an overview of each unit before you begin so that children know what to look forward to. There will be some background information for you, the facilitator, followed by prompts for a discussion to engage the group. This will be a basic conversation or question led by the facilitator to establish an environment where children can listen and learn from each other. There will be definitions in yellow for children to record. When sharing these definitions, be sure to write them on a white board or other display. Give examples or use the word in a sentence when possible.

Before you conduct an activity, be sure to read through it in advance. Give yourself ample time to gather necessary materials or other items that you think will enhance the unit. Brainstorm questions that children may have and research the answers. Of course, you may still be asked a question to which you don't know the answer. It is fine to say "I'm not sure," and look up the answer; never make up an answer. If you do not have time to help a student find an answer, have them write it on the "Questions" page of the book (which they will create in the first lesson) so that it can be revisited at a later time.

To create the students' books, there is a template you can print and fold prior to the first lesson (Alternatively, you may create your own). The template is formatted for double-sided printing; be sure to adjust your printer settings and print a test copy *before* printing multiple booklets. Every printer is different, so this may take some trial and error.

All that we ask from you in return for this curriculum is completion and return of an initial and final assessment (found in the first and last units). This will be a useful tool for you to evaluate what the children have learned, and will help us further improve the program for the future. Additionally, we would appreciate receiving your feedback in the Instructor's Evaluation.

If you have any questions about the program, you can contact The Cougar Fund via email at info@cougarfund.org or by phone at 307-733-0797.

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Unit # 1
What is a predator?

Introduction & Materials:

Introduction:

This first unit will be very basic and focus on engaging the students by identifying prior knowledge, providing critical vocabulary, and creating a journal which will be utilized throughout the course. This is the shortest lesson and can easily be paired with Unit 2 in order to compress the curriculum into a 5-day schedule (if desired). At the end of the unit, students should:

- Be able to explain what a predator is
- Know some key facts about cougars
- Have their own predator book to build upon

Materials:

- 6 pieces of printer or light colored paper for each student *OR* printed pre-formatted book pages from downloadable template
- Colored pencils or pens for each student
- Stapler
- White board or easel
- Camera (can be a phone camera)
- Images of the Predator of the Day and/or additional visuals (optional)

Activity: Construct a book

As part of this activity students will construct and decorate their own book. This will serve as their creation to build on as they go through the activities. Students will be introduced to a Predator of the Day (POTD) through each of the 6 lessons. In their journals, students will record information they think is interesting, and learn to draw the animal and it's footprint or track.

Books will also include space to record questions they have and new words they learn. This should not be a task, but more of an enjoyable activity to be creative with their illustrations. Encourage curiosity and questions throughout the activities.

You can download and print the pre-formatted book (provided with this curriculum by The Cougar Fund) that is already organized in a word document to (24 pages/12 double-sided). The other option is to have students build their own (dependent on time and resource availability).

If you choose to build your own, the simplest method is to give students 6 pieces of paper. Have them stack them neatly and then fold them in half. Open to the center page and staple in the fold to hold the pages together.

You can make any version of a book you would like as long as it has around 20 pages. The template creates 24 pages. Pencil, pens, or crayons are the best writing implements as markers have a tendency to bleed through to the next page. Having a book for yourself to follow along with and fill in can be useful. Additionally, the page numbers can be helpful for coordinating where in the book they should be writing. Pages are numbered front and back in the template starting with the cover as follows:

1. ..... Cover
2. ..... Back of cover (blank so cover decorations can bleed through!)
3. ..... Beginning Keywords and Examples & Definition of a Predator
4-15. ..... POTD 1-6
16-19. ..... New Words
20-21. ..... Questions
22. ..... Final Keywords and Examples
23. ..... The 3 coolest things I learned about predators

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Unit # 1
What is a predator?

Discussion: Introducing predators!

Introducing predators:

Quick Ice Breaker: Go around the room and have each student say their name and favorite animal.

Once each student has built their book, it's time to get them thinking about predators. At this point they will have probably asked you "*what is a predator?"* or have an idea or variations of definitions- **that's GREAT!** Before we start teaching them about predators, we want to get an initial assessment of what they already know regarding predators. Using a white board or large paper draw two columns, one to record **Keywords** and the other for **Examples.**

Keywords
large, hunt, fangs, claws, attack, stalk, pounce, talons etc.
Examples
lion, tiger, bear, wolf, shark, etc.

Start by asking the students to raise their hand so you can record each answer one by one. Prompt them with the question, **"What do you think of when I say predator?"** Record as they go along. If they are having troubles getting going, or if they are shy, you can always have them "Turn and Talk" i.e. Turn and talk with your neighbor, what do you know about predators? This will keep everyone engaged and more open to sharing with the group. Encourage them to come up with as many keywords and examples as possible.

When they have run out of ideas, have them go to page 3 of their books and fill in the columns. While they are doing that, we would like you to take a picture of the Keywords and Examples they came up with. This will be one tool to assess what they have learned, and also for The Cougar Fund to evaluate. This can be a basic phone picture.

Please email a copy to us at the Cougar Fund at info@cougarfund.org. Please put "Initial Assessment" in the subject and your name or organization name, city & state and # of students in the body of the email so we can pair it up with the final assessment at the end.

When students are finished copying the lists into their books, write the following definition out for them and have them record it on the first page in their book below their keywords and examples.

Predator- An animal that eats other animals to survive.

Ask if they have any questions about the definition. This is the simplest definition of a predator and moving into your first Predator of the Day will provide an example with facts that will help them better conceptualize what a predator really is.

Optional Extension:

Have students make a list at home with a guardian of all the predators they have seen. This could be in a zoo, on a trip to another area, but more importantly what predators have they seen in their own area? Have everyone share their list; allow them to tell short stories about where and when they saw these animals. The idea is to share their excitement and enthusiasm with each other about their personal experiences.

Predator of the day:

#1: The Cougar! Refer to the Predator of the Day packet

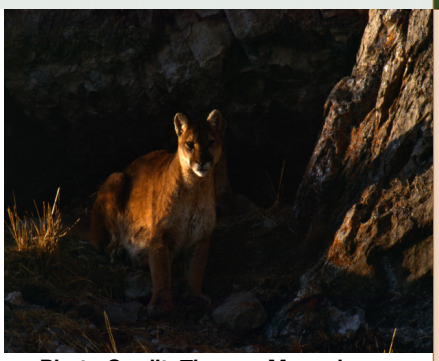

Photo Credit: Thomas Mangelsen

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