

Wolf Craft



Objectives: Kids will learn about the life history and social behavior of the gray wolf, including these vocabulary words: extinction, reintroduce, packs, canid, opportunistic hunter, ungulate. They will color, cut out and assemble a wolf puppet. This activity is adapted from [Tikkido](#).

Audience: This craft is suitable for kindergarten- third grade students. Adults may need to help the little ones with cutting.

Science Standards: K-LS1-1 Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive; 1-LS1-1 Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs; 2 LS4-1 Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats; 3-LS3-1 Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variation of these traits exists in a group of similar organisms.

Background: The gray wolf is one of the most controversial and iconic species found in the American west. They used to roam throughout North America, but conflicts with humans, their pets, and their livestock led to wolves being hunted almost to **extinction** (the dying out of a species) in the United States. Just like the mountain lion, coyote, grizzly bear, and many other predators, bounties were paid to anyone who brought in a dead wolf. Since being **reintroduced** (brought back to an area where they used to live, but where they no longer exist) into Yellowstone National Park in the mid-nineties, the gray wolf has made a miraculous comeback. They have spread from their original reintroduction site to many other places in Wyoming, as well as Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Some have even been tracked to Colorado and California.

Like their dog relatives, wolves are very social animals. They communicate with each other and live in social groups called **packs**. They work together to do most things including raising young, protecting the pack from predators and other packs, and hunting their prey. Because they work together to hunt, they can take down animals much larger than any single wolf could kill. They can also kill many more animals as a group than one wolf could kill on their own.

Many people do not like wolves and how they hunt. That is why reintroducing them was so controversial. Many people, including some ranchers, outfitters, and professional hunters, thought that wolves would kill all their livestock, as well as all the wild elk and deer if they ever came back. Even to this day, there is still a lot of hatred and fear of wolves in much of the western US.

Although many people dislike wolves, just as many or more people feel drawn to these wild **canids** (dog family). Maybe it's because of people's love of their pet dogs or maybe it's because wolves represent wilderness to them, but lots of people spend hours and hours looking for and at wolves in their natural habitat. Hearing the howl of a wolf is almost spiritual to these wolf lovers, and is a true sound of wildness.

Wolves are **opportunistic hunters** and are always on the lookout for something to eat. They most often hunt **ungulates** (hooved animals) like deer, elk, and moose. Unlike the cougar who uses sheer strength, speed, and power to catch their prey, the wolf uses endurance. Because they hunt as a pack, they will take turns being at the front of the hunt and trying to wear out their prey. They can follow an animal for hours this way.

Like other predators, wolves share some classic predator characteristics, including eyes in the front of their faces, long sharp canine teeth, and a keen sense of smell and hearing. Wolves eat mostly meat, but will occasionally supplement their diet with plants and berries.

Even though they are called gray wolves, they can be gray, brown, black, white, or a combination of these colors. To learn more about wolves, check out our Predator of the Day [fact sheet](#). Now it's time to make your own wolf puppet!

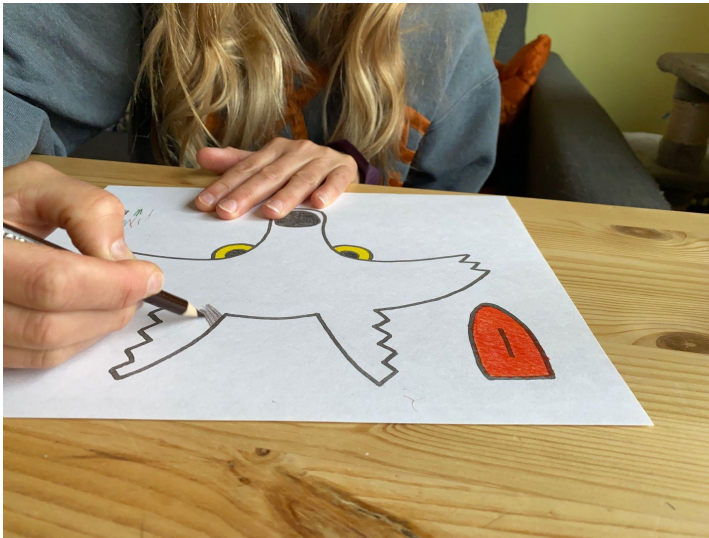


Supplies: paper lunch bag, scissors, glue, crayons, markers, or colored pencils, wolf face printout.

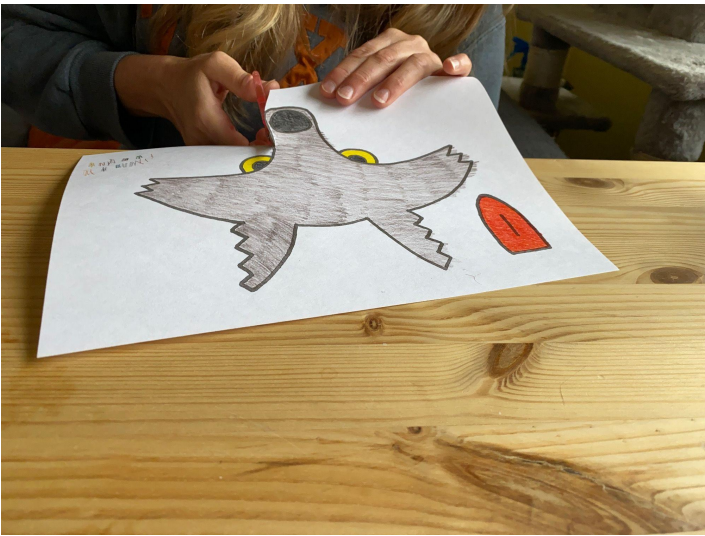


Instructions:

1. Print out the wolf face found at the end of this lesson. There are 2 sheets of paper.
2. Color both sheets of the wolf face print out including the tongue. It is best to color the front and back of the face in different colors for contrast. Wolves can come in many colors including gray, black, white, and brown.



3. Cut out the front and back of the wolf's face as well as the tongue.



4. Glue the back of the wolf's face onto the flap of the paper bag.



5. Glue the front of the wolf's face to the back of its face.



6. Glue the tongue under the flap where it can be seen when it is used like a puppet. The wolf puppet is complete!

**Extensions:**

1. Using different colors, create a fox or coyote puppet.
2. Write and put on a puppet show.

Discussion:

1. What happened to all the wolves in the United States? Why were they killed?
2. Why do you think wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone?
3. Why do wolves hunt in packs? How does a pack structure help them to survive?

