



Learning from the Past

Grade Level

Grade 2

Engage

This activity is designed to start your students in recognizing themselves as scientists and thinking critically about problem-solving. The goal is to teach concepts through discovery and to encourage using scientific thought processes. As with all lessons provided, please feel free to adapt them according to your students' abilities. You may find it more successful to lead activities and discussions as a whole group as opposed to having your students' work in small groups. Certain scientific vocabulary may or may not be appropriate for your students' level of understanding. Take these ideas, make them your own and your students will have a greater chance at success.

In what ways could changes to the environment cause plant and animal species to become extinct?

1. Begin this lesson by asking your students if they can identify an animal's five basic needs in life. Review and discuss how animals must meet their basic needs to survive in their environment.

Explore

2. From the included list, assign each student a local extinct animal they would like to research more in depth.
3. Have students work on computers or tablets individually or in small groups to find out more about their selected animal.
4. Encourage students to research important facts about their animal, such as diet, where it lived/its habitat in the wild, and how it obtained its basic needs in its environment.
5. Next, ensure students research what led to their species decline and caused its extinction. Did its environment change? If so, how? Could it no longer meet its basic needs?
6. Ask your students to save any photos they find and record any information that could be useful for finding an answer to the original question about extinction.

Explain

7. As a group, revisit the research question and continue to complete the research plan.
8. Discuss as a class: How might knowing all of this information about a specific animal that is now extinct, help us understand how changes in the environment impact local plant and animal species? Brainstorm ideas and record them.

Expand

9. Next, have your students prepare a short presentation on their specific local extinct animal that they will share with the class.
10. Allow students to get creative when developing their presentation, and remind them to be sure to include all important information about their extinct animal's environment/habitat, basic needs and any changes that occurred to the environment. Allow students to consider other challenges that may have occurred like competition for food or shelter, or if humans or another species could have impacted their species decline.

Assess

11. Each student should share what they learned with the class, explaining how their animal became extinct, and what changes caused their decline and extinction. They can also address if they think any plants or animals in our environment today could be at risk for extinction in the future for the same or similar causes.
12. Once all students have presented to the class, ask them questions to determine what they learned, and complete the research plan, either individually or together as a group. Together, discuss and create a list of similar local animals alive today. Determine if there is anything we learned from extinction stories of the past to help protect the environment and local species today to help prevent extinction in the future.

Standards

Ohio Academic Content Standards
Grade 2 Life Science Topic: Interactions within Habitats All organisms alive today result from their ancestors, some of which may be extinct. Not all kinds of organisms that lived in the past are represented by living organisms today.

Learning from the Past

Supplemental Materials

Extinct North American Animal Species

Mastodon*

Mammoth*

Eastern elk*

Glyptodon

Giant short faced bear*

Dire wolf

Blue walleye*

American cheetah

Ground sloth

Giant beaver*

Camelops

Heath hen *

Shrub ox

Great auk

Passenger pigeon *

Deepwater cisco *

*Local to Ohio/Midwest/Great Lakes region



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Supplemental Materials

My Research Plan

**1. What is my research question?
Is it a good question?**



In what ways could changes to the environment cause plant and animal species to become extinct?

2. How can I get my information?



3. What will I do with this information?



4. How will I know I did my job well?

