

Teachable Moments: A Guide for Your Fieldtrip

Mammal Halls, Grade 3

Gallery Description: The Museum's three, world famous Mammal Halls show African and North American mammals in their natural environments. Many of these mammals are shy, and some are nocturnal, so these scientifically accurate dioramas provide the only way most of us can get close to these creatures in their natural habitats.

Science Activities

- Look at a diorama with your students. Ask students, "What will happen to the mammals in this diorama if the environment changes?" For example, by the walrus diorama, you could ask, "If there is an oil spill what would happen to the walrus?"
- Go to walrus diorama (N. American Mammal Hall, 2nd floor) and ask students how they think the walrus gets to the fish under the ice. (They use their tusks to break the ice.)
- Go to the elk diorama (N. American Mammal Hall, 2nd floor) and notice the elks horns. Ask the students how they think the elk uses its horns. (For protection.)
- Go to the seal and or sea lion diorama (N. American Mammal Hall, 1st floor) and notice the seals flippers. Ask the students why seals/sea lions need flippers. (They swim in the water.)
- Have students go to both the North American and African Mammal Halls and find an example of each of the following habitats: desert, forest, coastal.

Language Arts Activities

- Tell students you are going to say some facts and opinions about a diorama. Have students give a thumbs up for a fact, and a thumbs down when they hear an opinion. For example:
 - “A walrus is the coolest mammal.” (opinion)
 - “A walrus uses tusks to break ice to get to fish.” (fact)

Social Studies Activities

- Go to the African Mammal Hall (1st floor). In this hall the dioramas on the left highlight lush tropic environments, the dioramas on the right are drier desert like habitats. Have students compare and contrast the plant life they observe on each side
- In the North American Mammal Hall (1st floor), the plaques have maps that show where each mammal is found. Have the students find what region of North America two different mammals come from.

These activities support the following 3rd Grade California State Standards:

Science

Life Science 3a: Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.

Life Science 3b: Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.

Life Science 3d: Students know when the environment changes, some plants and animals survive and reproduce; others die or move to new locations.

Language Arts

Listening and Speaking 1.11: Distinguish between the speaker's opinions and verifiable facts.

Social Studies

3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.