



WINGO!

Objective: This activity is designed to help students concentrate on looking for things that live and grow in a wetland.

Materials:

[WINGO cards](#) (set of 8)

Water-based markers

Background:

Students may have heard the term wetland and many may have visited wetland sites. However, they may not know exactly what wetlands are. With the help of legends, fictional stories, and the film industry, wetlands have been touted throughout history as mosquito-breeding, foul-smelling wastelands fit only for monsters and other unsavory creatures. For kids, that sometimes translates into stinky and scary.

Wetlands are basically *wet lands*. They are often transition zones between dry lands and deep water, but some are more isolated. The most common types of wetlands are swamps, bogs, and marshes. Students may know other types by a variety of names: mire, fen, moor, muskeg, prairie pothole, bottomland, riparian wetland, wet meadow, slough, playa lake, etc. What these have in common is what defines them as wetlands: water, special soil and specialized plants called hydrophytes. The interactions of these three characteristics are what make one kind of wetland distinct from another.

Wetlands may be any size or shape, from a low spot in a field that covers a few hundred square feet to an expansive marsh that covers several hundred square miles. In addition, water is present at or near the ground's surface all or part of the time, even for a few as seven consecutive days. Wetlands are found on every continent except Antarctica and in every climate from the tropics to the tundra. They may be in coastal or inland areas, along ponds or rivers, in agricultural fields, or even in cities.

Procedure:

- Laminate all the cards.
- This game can be played several different ways. Here are two suggestions. **Note:** Give each group one card and one water-based marker (All the cards have the same pictures on them; however, the blocks are arranged differently).
- Have students work in groups, with adult leaders. Groups that spot one of the items (or something similar, or an animal sign, such as a track) should shout "Wingo" and point it out for all to see. Then everyone can mark off the item on the cards. Try to find as many as possible.
- A second suggestion is to have students work in small groups with adult leaders. Have each group work independently to find items until they have marked off a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line, the shape of a T or L, or the whole card. The first group to make the designated pattern shouts "Wingo!" and wins. After completing the designated pattern, have the winning group show the other groups the location of all the marked items.

Grade Level:

2-6

Subject Areas:

Science, Reading

Setting:

At a wetland

Skills:

Observation, identification, interpreting information

Prior Preparation:

Ask students to describe what they think wetlands are, and what makes them unique. Make a list of their answers on the board to revise later as students learn more. Have students share their thoughts and feelings about wetlands before and after they were introduced to them. You can also have the class play the wetland food web game (located in the *Wetlands To Go* trunks) to familiarize them with the inhabitants of a wetland.

Vocabulary:

hydrophytes, environment

South Dakota Education Standards for 4th grade:

Reading

4.R.1.1; 4.R.1.2

Science

Nature of Science, Indicator 2

Vocabulary:

- **Environment:** the combination of external physical, chemical, and biotic factors affecting the growth and development of an organism or ecologic community.
- **Hydrophytes:** water loving plants

Extensions:

- Take your class on a brief field trip to two different settings such as the school playground (during recess) and a wetland. Have them sit quietly with eyes closed and listen to the sounds, taking note of what they hear. After a designated length of time, appropriate to the age group, have them share what they've heard. Compare and contrast the sounds in the two sites. Which did they find more pleasing?
- Ask each student to write down the name of a type of wetland (marsh, bog, swamp, etc.). Then have them write an example of an animal they associate with any type of wetland. Ask them to also write an example plant they associate with any type of wetland. Then have them write at least two adjectives or short phrases to describe a wetland. After the class has completed this, survey them item by item (it's not necessary to get each student's answer, but it is helpful to get a thorough picture. Make a table of the answers on the board. The answers will illustrate pre-conceptions or misconceptions related to wetlands and highlight the particular areas that could be better understood through subsequent instruction.
- Have students research and report on how different societies worldwide have used wetlands for food, housing, and economic gain. Two good sources of information are National Geographic and on-line encyclopedias.
- For several days before you begin a wetlands unit, display a new clue about wetlands each day. See if the students notice, then see if they can guess what the "mystery topic" is. You might bring in a package of rice, a bag of mud, a toy frog or alligator, a picture of some seafood, a clam or oyster shell, or a tape of bird songs or other natural sounds. On the last day, prior to starting your wetlands unit, hang up a wetlands poster (with the title covered).