

Animal Track Adventure

Age Range: K+	Group Size: best for small groups, but could scale up	Time: 45-60 Minutes
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Adventure Goals:

Our goal for every adventure is for children to have fun with books and reading. In this adventure, we will examine a book about animal tracks together, explore a bunch of books about different animals, and then create a drawing or story told in animal tracks.

Measurable Objectives and Outcomes:

- **Objective:** Participants will learn about animals and tracks in the area and translate that learning into a picture or story that they create and illustrate.
- **Outcome:**
Participants will be able to create their own picture or story using information from the book we shared together or one of the books the child explored on their own.

Adventure Outline:

We're going to explore wild animals, especially ones that live in North America. We'll learn about what kind of tracks they leave behind and what they look like. We'll explore some animal books, and then we'll create our own stories told in tracks and words. Finally, we will share our stories.

Supplies:

Paper, pencils and markers for each participant

Books of animal tracks, tracking, animal facts. Pull from books for all ages.

Optional: posters or other formats of animal tracks.

Adventure Considerations:

- How will you set up your program space? Do you want to have the art area separate from the reading area?
- If you have a large group, can you streamline the foot tracing process or just use a representative foot?

Adventure Plan	Navigation
<p>Hook:... (5 Minutes)</p> <p>Have you ever wished you could tell what animals in the wild are up to when you can't see them? Today, we're going to read a book about animal tracks and learn to decipher some of the prints that you see when you go for a walk, especially by a body of water. We're also going to compare the size of our feet and tracks with those of many North American wild animals. Finally, you will have the chance to create your own wildlife story- told in animal prints!</p> <p>Can anyone share what types of animal tracks they have seen and how they knew what kind of animal made them? What kind of animal tracks do you think you are likely to find in the woods? On the trail? On a farm? What about in the city- what kind of tracks might you see there?</p>	<p>Variation: <i>If the group is large, you might want to skip tracing feet. You could also use handprints instead. If the group is small and you have lots of time, do both a foot and a hand.</i></p>
<p>Getting Started: (15 minutes)</p> <p>We're going to each trace one foot on a piece of paper so we can compare print sizes as we read <i>Wild Tracks!</i> By Jim Arnosky. [give everyone pencils and paper. Parents can help trace, if present]</p> <p><i>Okay, now let's get started with the book. What do you notice about the cover?</i></p> <p>Before Reading: Encourage participants to <i>think and talk</i> about what they already know about animals and animal tracks. What do you notice about the cover?</p> <p>Consider including some of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a page from a book that includes key elements you want participants to think about and understand. Talk with participants about the elements. • Show the cover of the book and share the title aloud. Discuss in a group or in partners/family groups what they predict the book will be about. <p>Invite discussion using these open-ended VTS questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What's going on in this picture?"</i> <i>¿Qué está pasando en esta imagen?</i> 2. <i>What do you see that makes you say that?</i> <i>¿Qué ves que te hace decir eso?</i> 3. <i>What else can you find?</i> <i>¿Qué más puedes encontrar?</i> <p>While Reading: Involve participants in the read-aloud and add interactive elements throughout.</p> <p>Consider including some of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants which animal they think will have the biggest print, and the smallest, etc. As time and space allow, compare print sizes with some of the participants' own hands and feet. 	

- Use your finger to show where you are in the text.
- Talk about the pictures and where some of these animals might live.
 - Rephrase and expand on participants' thoughts to enhance language skills and vocabulary without overly correcting.
 - Connect participants' observations to each other, restate with rich vocabulary.
- As you read the story, ask comprehension and [open-ended questions](#), and elicit responses from the participants when appropriate.

After Reading: Discuss what participants thought about the book, and clarify the information as needed.

Consider including the following elements:

- Elicit participants' thoughts about the book: eg. what they liked and didn't like; what was surprising to them, what they were excited to learn, what they will do with what they learned..
- Encourage participants to make connections to their own lives or other things that they have read, listened to, watched, etc.

Book Browsing Time: (10 mins)

I've selected a bunch of books for you all to look at. They are about animals from around here and from all over the world. What animals do you want to know more about? Take a look and see if there's one (or more) you want to borrow.

Consider adding some of the following elements to enhance book browsing time:

Booktalk:

If you have the time, start with a couple of booktalks before open exploration. This is a chance for you to highlight different styles within a genre; model how to browse for a book to find ones that are interesting and at a good level for you as a reader; give reluctant readers some enticing materials to start with; and model looking at illustrations and writing styles to find a [mentor text](#) to use during writing/drawing activities.

Neighbor Share:

Invite participants to share about a book that they just looked at with another participant.

Consider including [sentence prompts](#) to help participants as needed.

Example Sentence Prompts:

- I picked....
- You should try this book because....
- This is my favorite part of the book because....

Adventure:...(20 mins)

Now it's your turn to create an animal story in tracks! We've got crayons, markers and paper. Can you make a picture of what you would see if a raccoon met a mouse? Or if a bear met a duck? What would it look like if you found bear tracks? You can write or draw to make your story. You can work by yourself or in a group.

- [Time to brainstorm and think/talk together as a group or in pair, family or language-based groups.](#)
- [Time to work independently or in pairs/groups.](#)
- [Opportunities and invitations for caregivers to participate in the activity if](#)

Time Management

Short on Time?: Consider having a large piece of paper with a drawing of a pond, trees, and a field on it for the kids to add their track story to instead of each child creating their own.

Tip:

Sentence prompts give structure that supports young children, reluctant speakers, and those learning English to share their ideas. You can allow participants to alter and/or deviate from these prompts depending on their need.

Example Extension:

Extend the brainstorming session by doing the activity all together as a group before participants try it on their own.

Family Engagement

Message:

Share a family engagement message if caregivers are present.

- present.
- Opportunities to develop language skills by thinking, discussing, sharing, reading, illustrating and/or writing.

Wrap-up/Share: ...(10 mins)

Now it's time to share the adventure you created!

Consider including some of the following elements in your wrap-up/Share:

- A review of the reading/writing strategies and/or key concepts covered during the adventure and ideas for how participants can use them in future reading/writing endeavors.
- Ideas and supplies for participants to take home to continue the adventure!

Vocabulary

See [Glossary of Key Terms](#).

Read-aloud and Book Browsing Suggestions

Wild Tracks! By Jim Arnosky- includes life-size tracks. Great choice for the read aloud.

Lesser Spotted Animals: the Coolest Creatures You've Never Heard of by Martin Brown

Beastly Brains: Exploring How Animals Talk, Think, and Feel by Nancy Castaldo

Curious Kids Nature Guide: Explore the Amazing Outdoors of the Pacific Northwest by Fiona Cohen

Tracks Count: a Guide to Counting Animal Tracks by Steve Engel

Shell, Beak, Tusk: Shared Traits and the Wonders of Adaptation by Bridget Heos

Actual Size by Steve Jenkins

Deadliest!: 20 Dangerous Animals by Steve Jenkins

Trickiest!: 19 Sneaky Animals by Steve Jenkins

Animals Do Too!: How They Behave Just Like You by Etta Kaner

Whose Poop is That? By Darrin Lunde

Zoo Scientists to the Rescue by Patricia Newman

If you are an afterschool program provider, consider borrowing books for your adventure from the public library! Librarians at your local library would be happy to help you choose which books to borrow. Also see [5 Tips for Building and Maintaining a Great Collection of Reading Materials](#).