

Savanna Mural

African Savanna



Step-by-Step Directions to build a savanna
on your classroom wall.

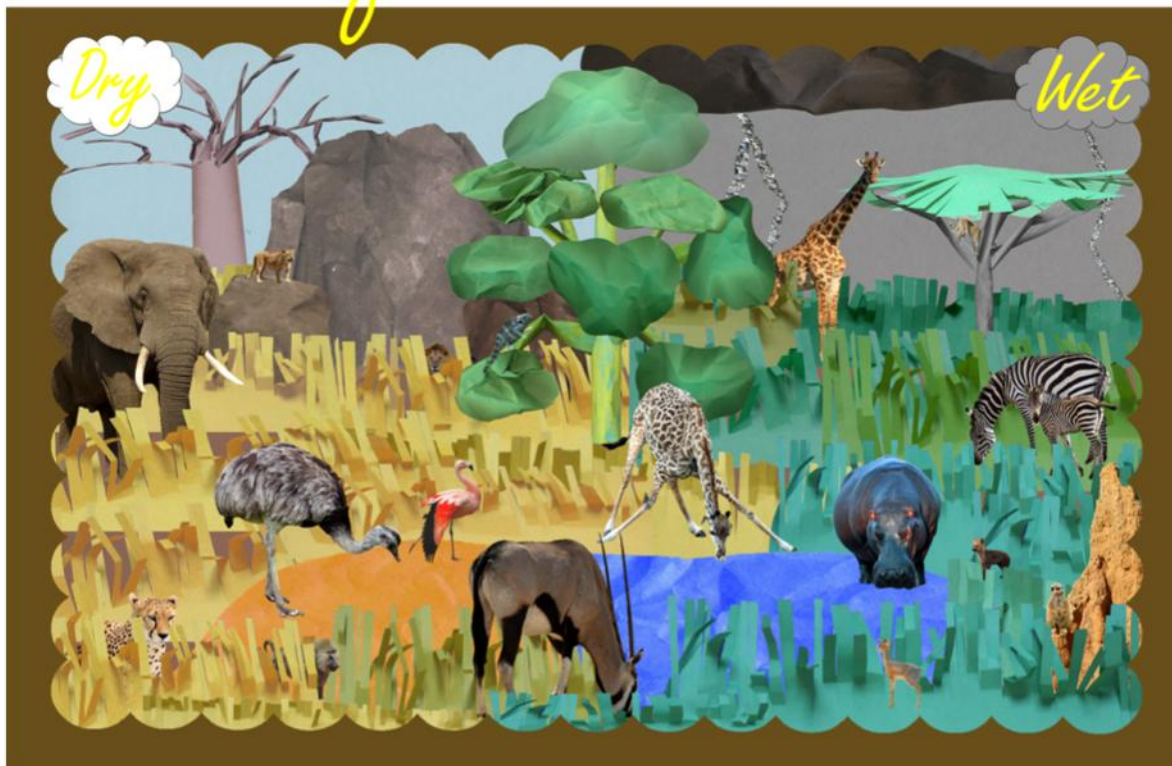
Includes animal cutouts and lettering

Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

Thanks
for taking the
time to check out
this savanna mural.
I hope you and your
kids will have an
exciting savanna
experience!!

Included Materials

African Savanna



Mural Directions: Step-by-step directions for making a mural of the African savanna. Teachers, parent volunteers and older children can use the directions to build a little piece of the savanna in your classroom.



Mural Cutouts: Twenty-nine public domain photographs of African animals are ready to use on your mural. Choose only those animals you wish to feature, then print, laminate, and cut them out. They'll last for your whole career.

Jumbo Cutouts: Twenty-one of the Mural Cutouts have been enlarged to use around your classroom. The largest (giraffe) is about 24 inches tall. Print only a few animals you wish to use.

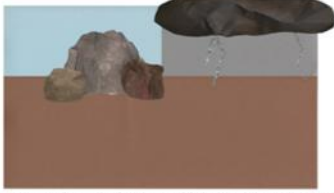


Lettering: Lettering and mural labels are included. Print, laminate, cut out.

Printing: You can print the items on a standard printer on letter sized paper, or print them on ledger sized paper on a large format printer. Some of the larger animals come in two pieces which will have to be taped together before laminating.

Savanna Mural

Background—The Land



There are two seasons on the savanna—dry and wet—and that's what makes a savanna. There's more rain than would fall in a desert, but not as much as falls in a woodland. Small saplings are killed by frequent dry-season fires, and the mature trees and grasses use most of the available water. The soil is porous and drains rapidly. It is often reddish-brown, or gray, in color, and a little acidic. There is only a thin layer of humus (decomposed plant and animal material) that feeds the plants. Wind and rain carve the exposed land by constant wear. Grasses help hold the soil in place, controlling erosion.

1. Cover the top of the mural area with blue and gray butcher paper to represent the dry and wet seasons of the savanna.



2. Cover the bottom of the mural area with brown butcher paper to represent the soil.



Koppes (KAW pees), granite out-croppings, are found throughout the African savanna. They are formed when volcanic lava pushes upward and then cools before breaking through the surface of the soil. As the wind and rain erode the ground covering these large granite boulders, they are gradually exposed. Many types of plants and animals live on the kopjes that would not be able to survive on the grassy plains. Lions often hide their cubs in these protected places.

If you want to paint the paper for the kopje before adding it to your mural (as in the sample), see the directions on page 15. This is a good project for a volunteer to do with small groups of children before you start the mural, or as the class is learning about kopjes.

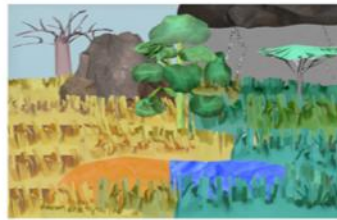
Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

www.thematicteacher.com

3

Savanna Mural

Plants—Grass and Trees



Savannas are large rolling plains of grass, that are wet enough to support scattered trees. Trees grow where there is sufficient soil nutrients, and they are often found along rivers and streams. In places where the water table is high, they may grow anywhere in the grassy fields. Savannas can only support a few types of trees. Grasses with deep-growing tap roots dominate the plains. They dry out and go dormant during the dry season, and then explode with rapid growth during the wet season.

1. Cut a strip of butcher paper long enough to fit across the mural. (You could also use several strips of construction paper.) Use yellow or tan paper for dry season grass, and green for the wet season. Since butcher paper flaps easily, make each cut a different depth, cutting deeply only occasionally. "Grass growing" at the top of the mural will be shorter than grass for the bottom of the mural to create perspective.



Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

www.thematicteacher.com

5

6. Place brown and blue butcher paper together. Draw a long narrow watering hole shape, and then cut it out. Fold the brown paper in half. Cut the brown paper on the fold, and then paste or staple it on top of the blue sheet. Crumple the whole thing from top to bottom to form "water lines", and then staple it on your mural. (The brown side is a dried up water hole.)



7. Add the rest of the grass around the water hole. Make each row of grass taller than the one above it.



8. If there are any pieces falling outside the edge of the mural, lay a yardstick on them and trim them with a box cutter or scissors to make a straight edge.



Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

www.thematicteacher.com

7

Savanna Mural

Trees—Baobab

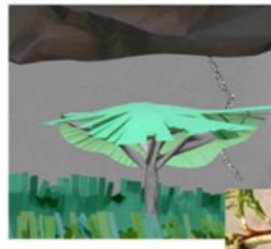


Baobabs are deciduous trees that lose their leaves in the dry season. They have shiny, pinkish-gray bark, and large white flowers which open at night. They go any other tree on the African savanna and can live to be 2,000 years old. Until the bark of the baobab will grow back when it is damaged or stripped. Local farmers use the bark to make rope. When the tree dies, it rots from the inside in space that is sometimes used as shelter. Eventually the dead tree collapses and peering from the landscape.

1. Roll a length of gray butcher paper into a tube. Make it the height of the tree's trunk. Squish the tube a little bit from side to side to give it some texture, but not too much. Staple it on the dry side of your mural. (This tree doesn't have leaves and is in its dormant state.)

Savanna Mural

Trees—Flat Topped Acacia



Acacia trees are found all over the African Savanna. The flat topped acacia, also called the umbrella tree, is the favorite food of some of the largest browsers, despite its pairs of straight and bent, sharp thorns. The graffe has a thick, sticky latex that coats any thorns it eats which protects its digestive tract. The leaves of the tree are very small, which gives the canopy a feathery look. It has gray to black, rough bark. It is a small tree that grows very slowly.

1. Cut a cloud-shaped piece of green butcher paper. Cut fringes of varying lengths around the entire piece. Then fold it in half lengthwise.

Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

8

Savanna Mural

Trees—Yellow Barked Acacia



This acacia tree has yellow-green bark which is covered with a yellow powder that can easily be rubbed off. It grows quickly, but doesn't live long. It's also called "fever tree" because it grows near rivers, streams, and watering holes, places where malaria flourishes.

1. Cut a piece of butcher paper the height of the tree trunk, and 3-5 times wider. Roll it into a tube and tape it. Crunch and twist the sides in a little to form some texture.
2. Rub the whole "trunk" with yellow chalk. Any standard yellow classroom chalk or sidewalk chalk will do. Put plenty on so your students will be able to rub it off.

Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

12

www.thematicteacher.com

Savanna Mural

Animals



1. Place the animal cut-outs on the mural. Put some behind grass. Put some on the kopje. Arrange them as needed, depending on the cut-outs you've chosen to use, keeping in mind the relative size of the animals to each other in real life. If a cut-out looks funny where you've placed it, just move it up or down until it looks right. When you are happy with the arrangement, staple them in place.
2. This mural also looks GREAT if you use children's animal art projects! You may want to start with the cut-outs and replace them as the children create their own.
3. If you wish, you may add a border. Plain black construction paper, cut to 2-3 inches wide frames the image without overpowering it. You can leave it without a border, or use any border you already have.

Copyright © 2016 Integreat! Thematic Units

14

www.thematicteacher.com

Step-by-Step Directions to build a savanna on your Classroom wall.

Mural Cutouts



Two sets of savanna animals are included. Twenty-nine Mural Cutouts (up to 15 inches tall) are smaller and scaled to match the placement of the animals on the sample mural. **Choose and print only the images you want to feature on your mural.** Twenty-one Jumbo Cutouts (up to 24 inches tall), are included in case you wish to have a few larger animals to place around your classroom. (They also make good floor puzzles for younger students.) The Jumbo Cutouts are not scaled in any way. Each set contains some images that are in 2 pieces which must be taped together. Do NOT plan on using every image included in either set!

Each set of cutouts comes in two printing formats:

- Letter size, to print on a standard printer (8.5X11 paper).
- Ledger size, to print on a large format printer (11X17 paper).

Use the set for the type of printer and paper that you have.

Preparation

1. Print the items you wish to use on heavy white drawing paper, cover stock, or photo paper (for best results). **Choose only those images you wish to use.**
2. Some items have multiple pieces that need to be taped together. If you wish to attach the pieces before laminating, carefully cut off the margins with a paper cutter, lay the pieces together, and tape them on the back. Then when you laminate them, the lamin will bond the pieces together so they do not bend at the tape. (You can tape them together after laminating and cutting, if you prefer.)
3. Laminate.
4. Cut out.

When you place the animals onto your mural, keep perspective in mind. Place animals higher up on the mural to make them appear farther away. Place them lower to make them look closer. Placing the images correctly will help to keep the perspective in scale. (The Mural Cutouts are scaled to match the placement on the sample mural. The Jumbo Cutouts are not scaled in any way.) During the unit, you may replace these images with those created by your students.



29
Cutouts
Scaled for
a Mural





21
Cutouts
Jumbo Size



White Rhino Eating: Photo by JamesDeMers, via Pixabay.com.

Sample Jumbo Cutout



African Savanna



Lettering and Labels