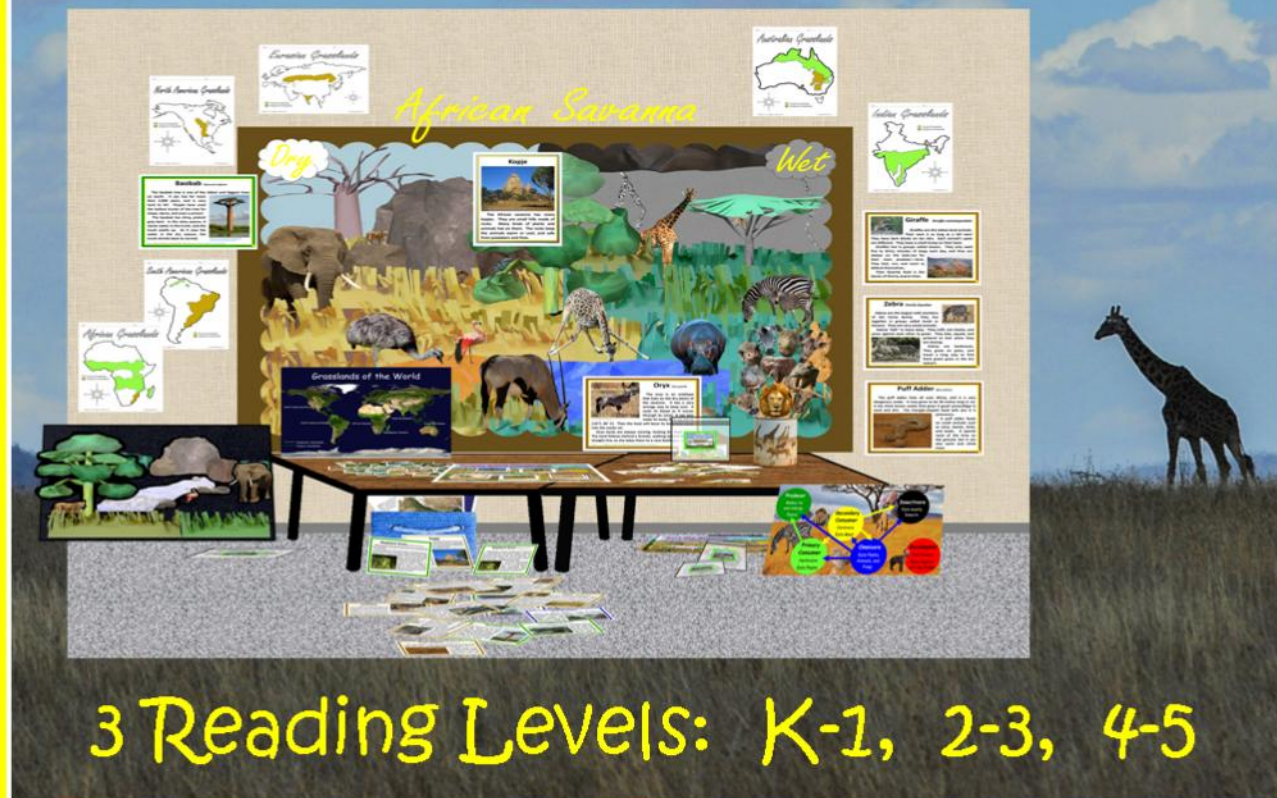


# Savanna Safari

Maps, Mural, Mini Museum



3 Reading Levels: K-1, 2-3, 4-5

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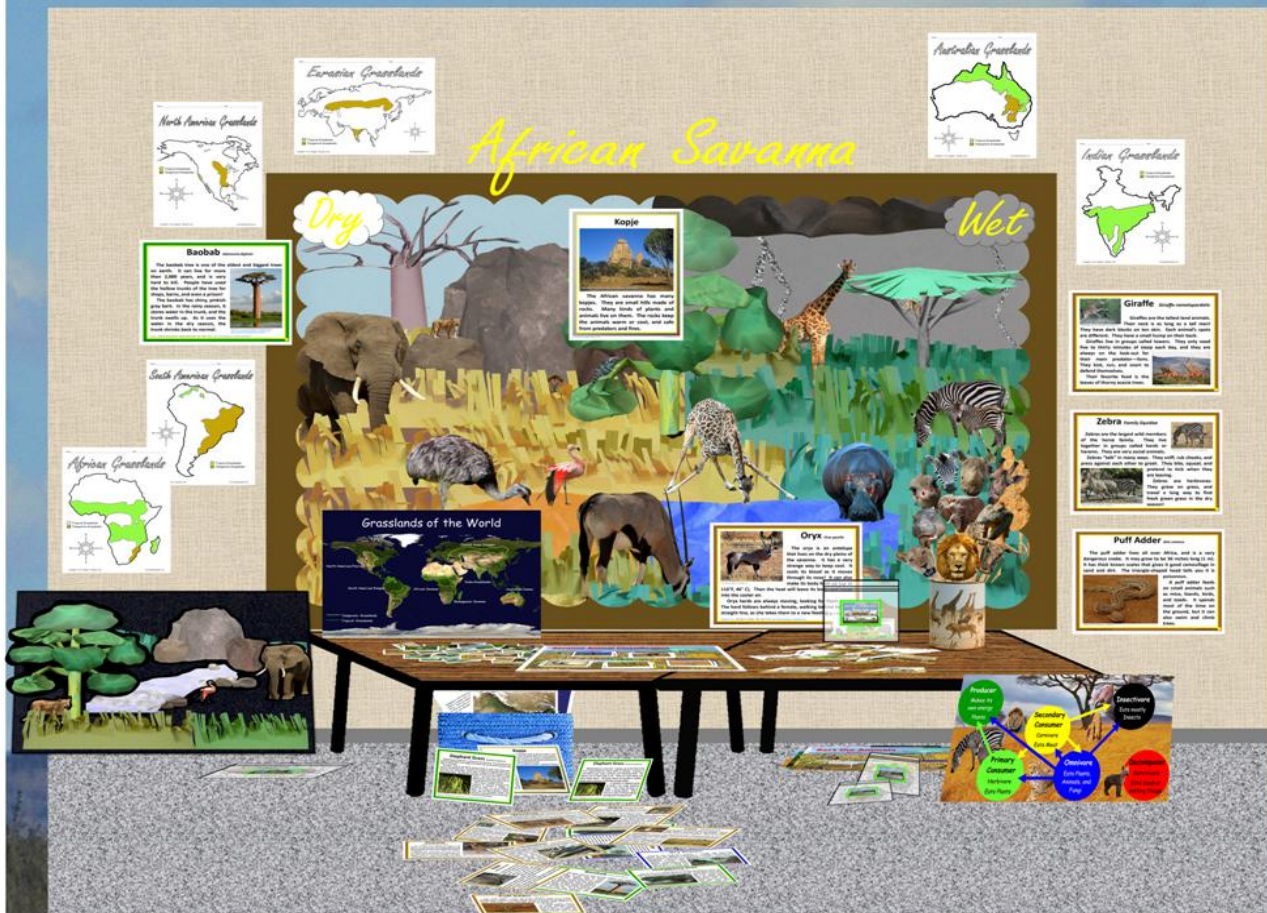
All images are compressed for sample purposes.

Thank you for taking the time to check out these center materials for the study of the amazing African savanna. There are lots of materials to help you set up an interesting and educational "museum" for your students to explore as they research animals of the grasslands.

*Sandie Flynn*

# Savanna Safari

Maps, Mural, Mini Museum



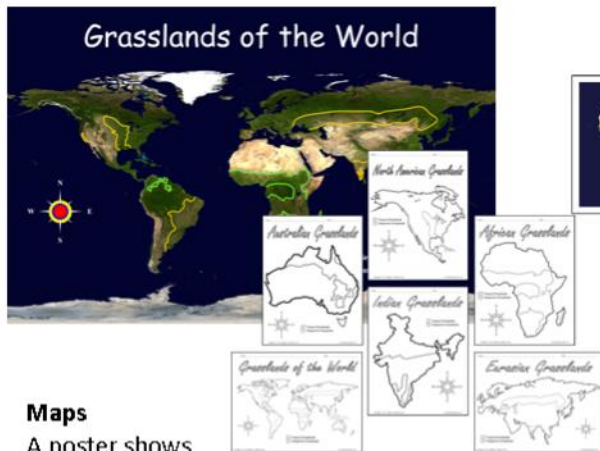
3 Reading Levels:  
Grades K-1, 2-3, 4-5

# Savanna Safari: Maps, Mural, Museum

## Overview of Center Materials

This unit contains materials for a classroom “mini museum” where students learn about life on the African savanna.

Here’s what’s included in this center:



### Maps

A poster shows the grasslands of the world, and student worksheets allow them to identify temperate and tropical grasslands on each continent. Map study cards give students a look at a satellite image, and additional information to read and think about.

Grades 2-5



### Flannel Board

Magnetic and flannel board images are included which can be printed on magnetic or canvas paper which will last a long time. They may also be printed on cardstock, laminated, and sticky back loop fasteners, sandpaper or magnetic strips can be glued to the back.



### Parent Newsletter

Send home a month before the unit to solicit parental help in preparing materials. A version for Publisher™ and Word™ are included.



### Mural

Directions and cutouts are included for a mural background for your center.



### Mural Cutouts

Photographs of animals of the African savanna may be cut out and placed on your mural or around your classroom.



### Reading / Coloring Pages

Student reading passages can be used for instruction, research, non-fiction writing models, or free exploration. Grades PS-5

Text materials come in 3 or 4 versions and may be color coded: **Preschool** **K-1** **Grades 2-3** **Grades 4-5**

Only print out the materials appropriate to your grade level. Each file has preparation directions, and suggestions for a variety of ways to use the item. I hope you and your students will find the materials fun, and educational!



### Animal Masks / Puppets

A set of animal faces can be used as stick puppets or student masks. Animal information, presented in paragraph form for grades K-1, and outline form for grades 2-5, may be printed on the backs of the puppets. Some of the animals in the sets differ, depending on grade level. A can cover is included. Grades PS-5



savanna has many small hills made of sandstone. The rocks keep the ground cool, and safe from fires.

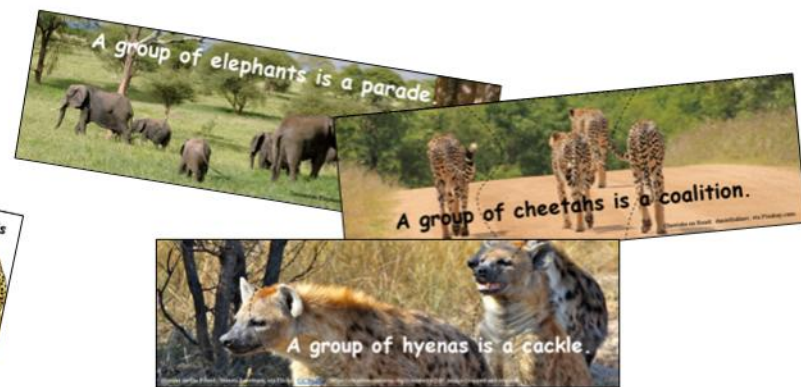
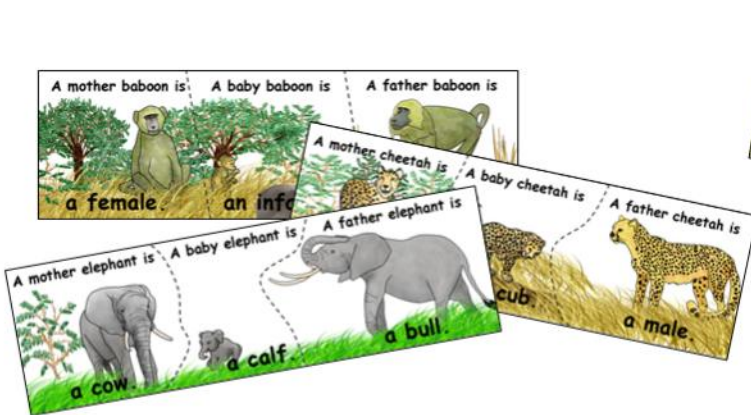
### Display Cards

Modeled on the information plaques found in museums, these 8.5X11 cards describe interesting facts about savanna plants and animals. Grades K-5



### Sorting Mats and Cards

Five sorting mats (4 for PS-Grade 1) and 64 plant and animal cards allow students to learn complex concepts quickly. Cards are sorted according to season, plant adaptations, where it lives on the savanna, diurnal or nocturnal, and animal classification. Grades K-5



### Animal Family Matching Puzzles

15 sets of animal families can be cut into puzzles. Each piece is labeled with a sentence such as, "A mother giraffe is a cow." Each set includes mother, father, and young. Grades PS--2.

### What is it called?

23 photographs of animal groups show their surprising and interesting group names. Can be cut into puzzles, stapled into a booklet, or used as bookmarks. Grades 3-5





**Inside this Issue:**

New Unit of Study	1
Preparing Materials	1
Donating Materials	2
I Can Help	2



- Special Points of Interest**
- Bringing the African savanna to our classroom.
  - Students will learn about the plants and animals of the African savanna.
  - Things we need
  - Ways you can help



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## Savanna Safari: Maps, Mural, Mini Museum



We are preparing for an exciting unit on the African savanna.

In a few weeks, our class will begin a study of the African savanna. I would like to build a classroom museum to provide a place with materials for the children to explore, investigate, manipulate, discover, and learn. In order to turn a corner of our classroom into a "savanna" I need a number of materials. This newsletter is designed to let you know our plans and see how you can help us prepare for this exciting unit.

We are planning to create a wall mural as a background for our new center.

- Does your child have any stuffed animals or books about the savanna? Would you (and he) be willing to share them with us?
- We could also use some plastic animals such as elephants, giraffes, hippos, and rhinos to use in our museum.
- Do you have any left-over grass seed? We would like to plant a savanna right in our classroom!

### Running Copies, Setting up a MiniMuseum

We have a number of materials to prepare before beginning the project. There are display cards, mural cutouts, sorting cards and mats to run off, laminate, and collate. If you could help at home or at

school with any of these tasks, please complete the form on page 2 and it return it to school as soon as possible. Thanks for your help! We are looking forward to a new adventure!



www.thematicteacher.com



## Donations Needed: Time and Materials

There are many ways that you can help us prepare for our new unit of study on the savannas of the world.

**Photo Paper**  
If you would like to run the mural cutouts off on photo paper to improve their quality, if you have paper you would contribute to the cause, you would improve the materials not just for your child, but for all the students who use the materials in the future. We also need white paper stock for some of the materi-

**Standard Printing**  
There are also a number of items that need to be printed on letter size paper (8.5X11). If you can print any of these at home, it would be greatly appreciated. If you don't have your own printer, perhaps you could come to the school and print the items.



**Cutting**  
All the laminated items will need to be carefully trimmed. Many of the resources the students will be using will also need to be cut out. I can send the items home with your child, so those of you who cannot come to the school to help may be able to help us that way, at your convenience.



**Large Format Printing**  
There are a number of items that need to be printed, a few of which would be easier to reproduce on a large format printer. If you have a printer that prints on ledger sized paper, 11X17, and are willing to print the larger items for us, that would be very helpful! I will send the computer files home on a disk or flash drive.

**Laminating**  
All the materials we are putting together today will be used for years to come. To help them stay in good condition for future students, most things will need to be laminated. If you are familiar with using the school laminator, and would like to help in this way, please let me know on the form below.

If you have any materials, books, or a personal interest in the African savanna, and you could share them with us, please let me know. I plan to start the unit in 4-5 weeks, so it would help tremendously if you could let me know how you can help as soon as possible.



### Here's how I can help!

I would like to help with the research materials for the *Mayflower* at home at school by printing laminating cutting donating \_\_\_\_\_ lending \_\_\_\_\_

I can make \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

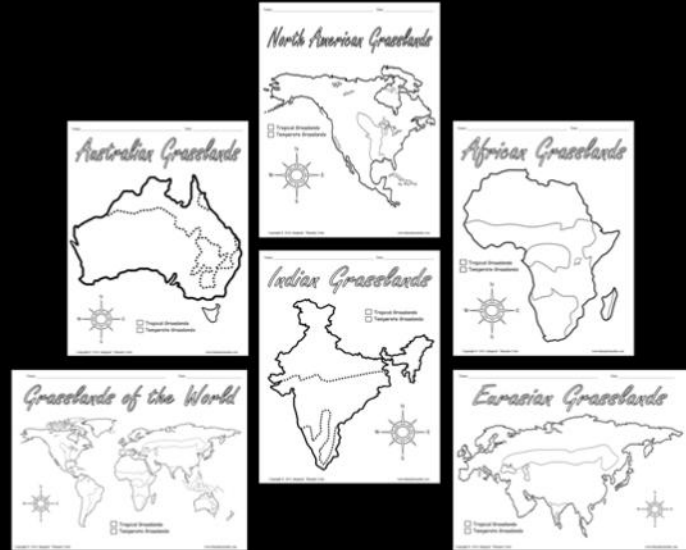
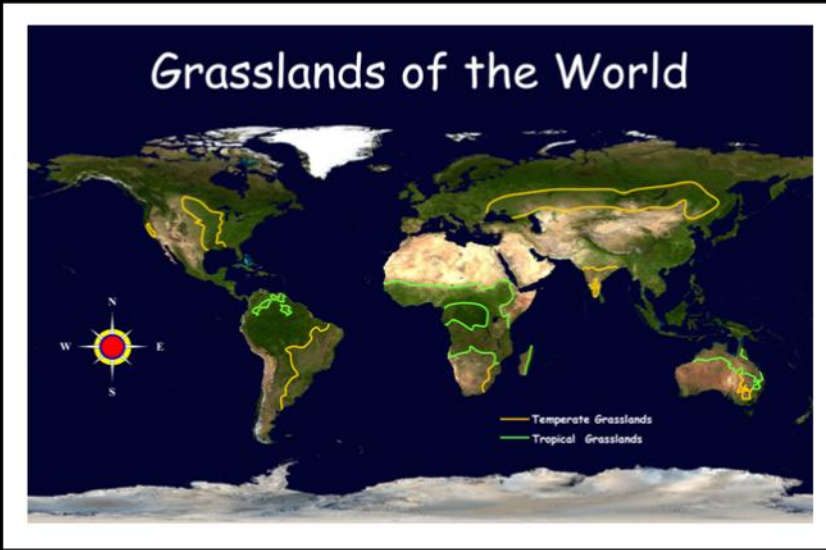


# Parent Newsletter

Send home a month prior to unit to solicit parent help in preparing materials

# Maps

## A poster of the Grasslands of the World, Student continental map worksheets, and Map Study Cards



A collage of map study cards for various grassland regions. Each card includes a map of the region, a title, and descriptive text. The cards are: "Central Asia" (with a photo of a horse), "North American Prairies" (with a photo of a prairie landscape), "India: Many Grasslands or No Grasslands?", "Australia: Greening Up from La Nina" (with a photo of a kangaroo), "Africa" (with a photo of a savanna landscape), "Madagascar" (with a photo of a lemur), "South America" (with a photo of a toucan), and "Tasmania" (with a photo of a wallaby). Each card also includes a small map of the region and a legend.

# African Savanna



## Classroom Mural Directions and Animal Cutouts

**Savanna Mural**  
Background—The Land

There are two seasons on the savanna—dry and wet—and that's what makes a savanna 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 seasons 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 is a little acidic. There is only a thin layer of humus (decomposed plant and animal material) that feeds the plants. Wind and it dries 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.

Rocks, baobab trees, granite outcroppings, 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 wind and rain erode the ground covering these large granite boulders, they are gradually exposed. The tops of grass and animals live on the boulders that would not be able to survive on the grass plains. It often hide their cubs in these protected places.

If you want to paint the paper for the mural before adding to your mural (as in the sample), see the ideas on page 23. This is a good project for a volunteer to do with small groups of children before you do the mural, or as the class is learning about topics.

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**Savanna Mural**  
Plants—Grass and Trees

Savanna are large rolling plains of grass, that are wet enough to support scattered trees. These grass 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 grass fields. Savanna can only support a few types of trees. Grasses with their growing base 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. This 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 "rips" 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.

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**Lion**  
 A lion is a big, wild cat. It has brown and tan fur. There are sharp claws on its feet. It can pull the claws in or push them out. Only male lions have a big, bushy mane.  
 Lions live in groups. There may be 15 lions in a group. The group is called a pride.  
 Lions need tall grass to hide in, so they can sneak up on their prey. They are meat eaters, and they hunt at night. Only the female lions hunt. They get enough food for the whole pride.

**Lion**  
 I. Body  
 A. 4-6 feet long  
 B. Tan to light brown color  
 C. Weigh 250-500 pounds  
 D. Can run up to 50 miles per hour  
 II. Life  
 A. Live in groups called prides  
 B. Live in grassy places  
 C. Eat meat  
 D. Hunt at night, sleep in day  
 III. Cubs  
 A. All females take care of the cubs  
 B. Live with mothers for 16 months  
 C. Hide for first 8 weeks

**Lion**  
 I. Body  
 A. 4-6 feet long (1.2-2 m)  
 B. 277-550 pounds (125-250 kg)  
 C. Can run up to 50 miles per hour  
 D. Lose skin on daily basis  
 E. Rough tongue tears skin off of prey  
 F. Large claws retract into claws; put out to hold prey  
 II. Life  
 A. Live in groups called prides  
 B. African and Indian savannas  
 C. Eat meat  
 D. Many territories with urine and scent glands  
 E. Predate humans  
 1. Amelops  
 2. Zebra  
 3. Any thing they want to eat  
 III. Hunting  
 A. Females hunt in teams  
 B. Hunt at night or early morning  
 C. Attack animals much smaller than them and use their field of vision  
 D. Stomping  
 E. Digging  
 F. Slapping them when they are trying to back away from all sides  
 G. Roar for the pride



Set K-1



Set 2-3



Set 4-5

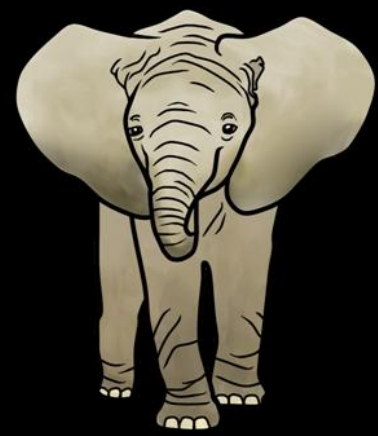
- Baboon
- Cheetah
- Crocodile
- Elephant
- Flamingo
- Giraffe
- Hippopotamus
- Hyena
- Kudu
- Leopard
- Lion
- Lioness
- Meerkat
- Ostrich
- Rhinoceros
- Vervet Monkey
- Wildebeest
- Zebra

**Animal Puppet/Masks**  
 Can be made into stick puppets or masks  
 Includes can cover for storage



Wet Season

Dry Season



Sort the animal cards by when the animal is most busy. Turn a card over to learn more.

Where Does it Live?

Savanna Animal Sort

Birds

How Plants Adapt to the Savanna

Wet

Dry

Defenses

Look at each animal card. Is it busy in the day or in the night? Sort them and see if you are right!

Set 2-3

Where Does it Live?

Look at a card. Where does it live? Put it in the box. See if you are right.

Savanna Wet Season

Savanna Dry Season

Sort the Animals

Birds

Mammals

Look at an animal card. What kind of animal is it? Put it in the right box.

Bush

Arthropods

Amphibians

Reptiles

Savanna Animal Classification

Ave

Life on the Savanna

Sort the cards according to where they may be found on the African savanna. Turn a card over to learn more.

Savanna Plant Adaptations

Store Water

Defenses

Dormancy

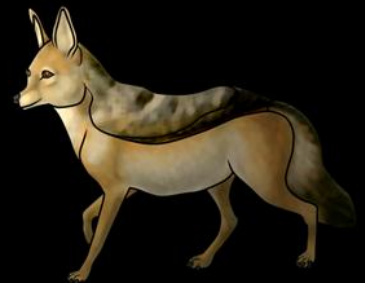
Special Roots

Scrub

Small Leaves

Sort the plant cards according to how each one has adapted to life on the savanna. Some plants have more than one adaptation. Turn the card over to learn more.

Set PS-1



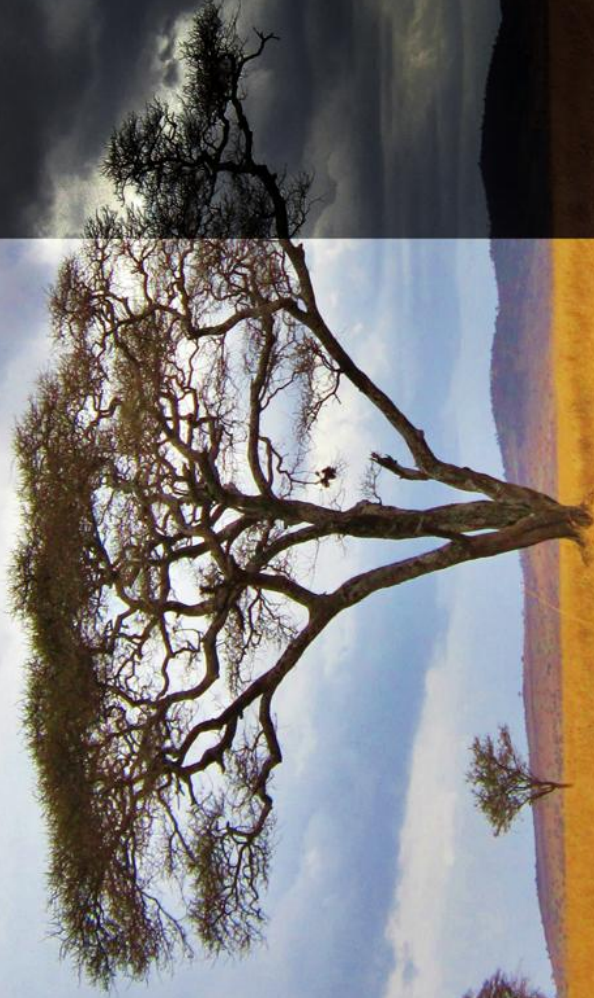
Set 4-5

# Sorting Mats

At three levels: PS-1, 2-3, 4-5

Teach complex concepts quickly!

Sort the animal cards by when the animal is most busy. Turn a card over to learn more.



# Diurnal (Day)



# Nocturnal (Night)



# Sorting Cards

## Plants and Animals of the African Savanna

At three levels: PS-1, 2-3, 4-5

*Set PS-1*

African Striped Skink

Where Does it Live?

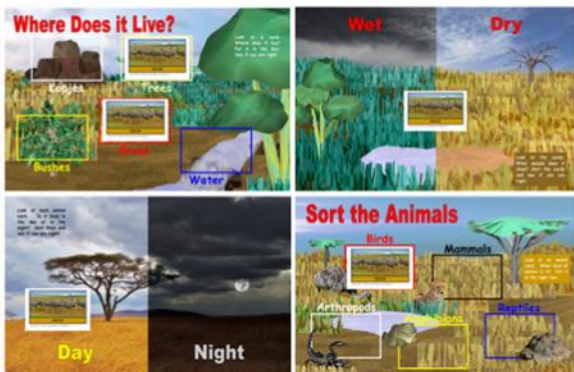
Kopjes, Grasslands, Woodlands

Savanna Animal Sort: Reptiles

Diurnal (Day)

*Set 2-3*

*Set 4-5*



pictured in Dry Sea:

Flat Topped Acacia (Umbrella Tree)

Where Does it Live? Grasslands

Plant Adaptations:

Defenses: pairs of sharp thorns, leaves taste bad

Small leaves

Special Roots

Season: Pictured in Dry Season

Self-checking information can be printed on the back of each card.



**Dikdik**

*Dikdik: Photo by Klinkow, via Pixabay.com.*



**Springbok**

*Springbok: Photo by Barnil, via Pixabay.com.*



**Baboon**

*Baboon: Photo by evdw, via Pixabay.com.*



**Impala**

*Impala: gekkodigitalmedia, via Pixabay.com.*



**Cheetah**

*Cheetah: Photo by GregMontani, via Pixabay.com.*



**Nile Crocodile**

*Nile Crocodile: Photo by miniformat65, via Pixabay.com.*



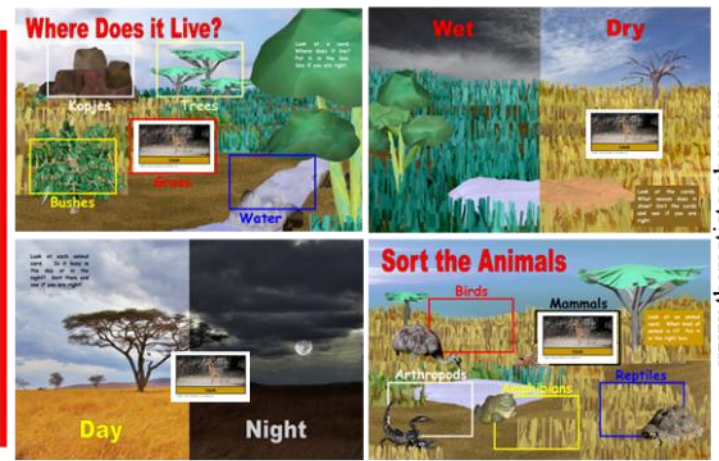
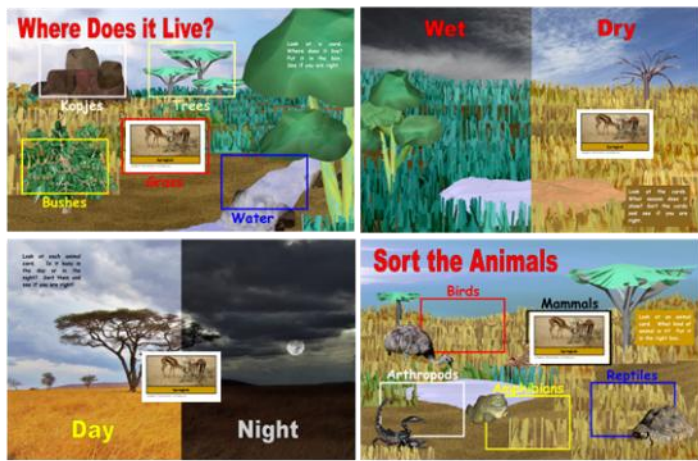
**Giraffe**

*Giraffe Group: Photo by hbieser, via Pixabay.com.*



**Elephant**

*Tanzanian Elephants: Photo by dpatdfci, via Pixabay.com.*



### Impala

Where Does it Live?

Grasslands, Near Woodlands

Savanna Animal Sort: Mammal

Diurnal (Day), Some Nocturnal (Night)

Season: Pictured in Dry Season

### Baboon

Where Does it Live? Woodlands, Grasslands, Near Water

Savanna Animal Sort: Mammal

Diurnal (Day)

Season: Pictured in Dry Season

### Nile Crocodile

Where Does it Live?

Water: Riverine

Animal Classification: Amphibia

Nocturnal, Some Diurnal

Season: Pictured in Dry Season

### Cheetah

Where Does it Live?

Grasslands, Scrublands, Woodlands

Animal Classification: Mammal

Diurnal

Season: Pictured in Wet Season

### Elephant

Where Does it Live?

Woodlands, Near Water

Animal Classification: Mammal

Diurnal and Nocturnal

Season: Pictured in Wet Season

### Giraffe

Where Does it Live?

Acacia Grasslands, Woodlands

Animal Classification: Mammal

Diurnal, Some Nocturnal

Season: Pictured in Dry Season

## Giraffe



A giraffe is a very tall animal. It has a long neck and brown spots. Giraffes eat a lot of leaves each day. They can kick, run, and snort to get away from lions, leopards, and crocodiles.

## Rainy Season



It rains almost every day on the savanna in the rainy season. The rivers and water holes fill up. The plants save water in their stems. The

## Kopje



The African savanna has many kopjes. They are small hills made of rocks. Many kinds of plants and animals live on them. The rocks keep the soil warm or cool, and safe from fires.



## Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*

Cheetahs run faster than any other land mammal. They can run up to 70 miles per hour, but only for a short time. They are made for speed!

Cheetahs feed on hares, antelope, and gazelle. They hide in tall grass and shrubs, watching for their prey with very good eye sight. When the prey is close enough, they burst out of hiding and knock it over. When it's dead they drag it to a shady spot to feed.



## Baobab *Adansonia digitata*

The baobab tree is one of the oldest and biggest trees on earth. It can live for more than 2,000 years, and is very hard to kill. People have used the hollow trunks of the tree for shops, barns, and even a prison!

The baobab has shiny, pinkish gray bark. In the rainy season, it stores water in the trunk, and the trunk swells up. As it uses the water in the dry season, the trunk shrinks back to normal.



## Puff Adder *Bitis arietans*

The puff adder is one of the most common, and dangerous, snakes in the African savanna. They grow up to 36 inches (1 m) long, and are easy to recognize by their thick, shades-of-brown scales. These colors give them great camouflage in the dried grasses. Their triangular head tells you they are poisonous. Because they are so common, puff adders cause more deaths than any other African snake. Snake bites are especially troublesome in Africa because many people don't have access to good health care. Still, only about 2%-5% of people who are bit will die.



The puff adder preys at night, ambushing its prey. It feeds on small animals such as mice, lizards, birds, and toads. Although it spends most of the time on the ground, it can also swim and climb trees.

## Candelabra Tree *Euphorbia candelabrum*

The candelabra tree is a succulent, a type of plant that has special cells that store water. It has a short, thick trunk out of which stubby branches grow, giving it the look of a candelabra. It grows in dry, open woodlands on the African savannas.



The tree has a latex which is dangerous to humans. It causes blisters when it gets on skin or mucus membranes such as the nose and throat. If it comes in contact with eyes, it causes blindness. In spite of being toxic, the latex is used as a medicine to treat coughs. It is placed in porridge and eaten to cleanse the intestines. It is applied to sores, wounds, and warts, and may be mixed with fat and rubbed on the skin to treat malaria! It is applied to ponds and streams to kill fish and wildlife.



## Dry Season

There are two seasons in the savanna—the long, dry season in winter, and the wet, rainy season in summer. During the dry season, little or no rain falls. The rivers and watering holes dry up, the plants drop their leaves, and the grass withers. Food becomes hard to find. The dry season usually lasts from six to eight months and is the reason why the savanna doesn't turn into a forest.

All savannas are subject to frequent, quick-burning wildfires started by lightning, or man's mistakes. Fires keep the grasslands grasslands. They kill all the small tree seedlings, which keeps the savanna from becoming a woodland. Old, dead brush, is cleared away, making room for new plants to grow. The ash works its way into the soil, making it richer and more fruitful. The fires are good for the land, but terrible for the animals.



**Display Cards**  
Modeled after the plagues found in museums, these display cards highlight interesting characteristics of Africa's plant and animal life.

PS, K-1, 2-3, 4-5

# Whistling Thorn



*Whistling Acacia Thorns: Photo by Pharaoh han, via Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.*



*Acacias in Grass Field: Photo by PublicDomainPictures, via Pixabay.com*

**Acacia trees grow all over the savanna. One kind is the whistling thorn. Ants live in the thorn. They eat nectar from the tree. They climb on animals who eat the tree.**

# Whistling Thorn

*Acacia (Vachellia) drepanolobium*



Acacias in Gram Field: Photo by PublicDomainPictures, via Pixabay.com.

The whistling thorn is one kind of acacia tree that grows all over the savanna. Ants live in the round base

of the tree's thorns and eat its nectar. They help the tree by swarming all over the large browsers that try to eat the leaves. They kill young trees that try to grow nearby. The tree gives the ants a home, and the ants protect the tree. That's called symbiosis!



Whistling Acacia Thorns: Photo by Pharaoh han, via Wikimedia Commons. [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license](#) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>

Sanders, Madison. Whistling Thorn Acacia (Acacia drepanolobium). Web: May 10, 2016. <https://prezi.com/nv2ldiblmj3g/whistling-thorn-acacia-acacia-drepanolobium/>





*Acacias in Grain Field: Photo by PublicDomainPictures, via Pixabay.com.*

# Whistling Thorn

*Acacia (Vachellia) drepanolobium*

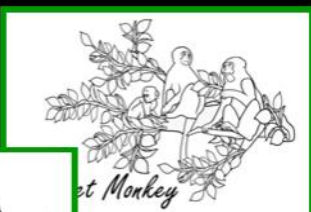
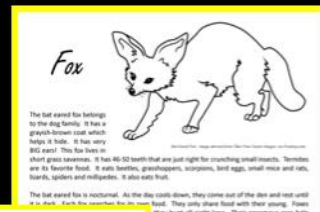
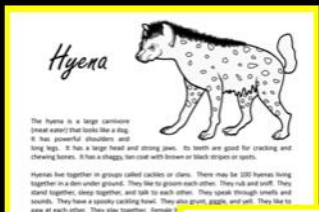
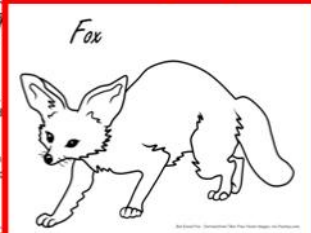
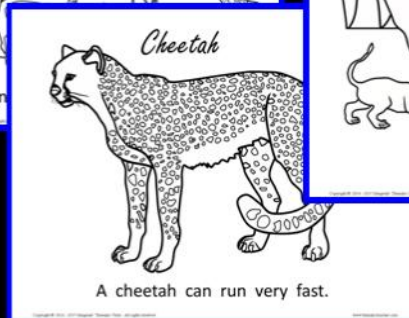
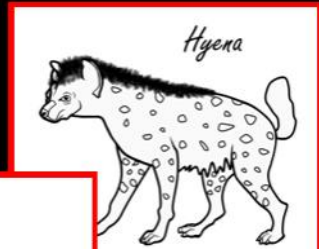
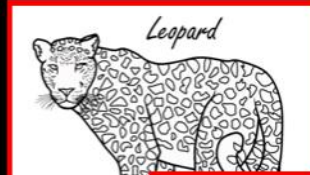
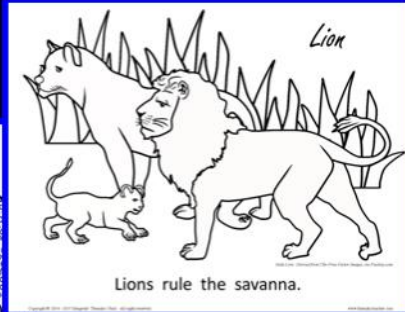
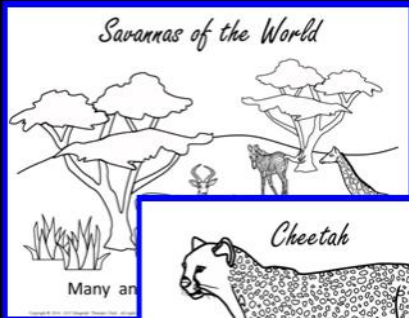
The whistling thorn acacia is found all across Africa's savannas. The tree works together with ants that live in it. The ants build their nests in the swollen bases of its thorns, and eat the tree's nectar found in the leaf stems. They protect the tree by swarming on the large browsers (giraffes, elephants, zebras) that feed on the leaves, driving them away. They kill seedlings growing beneath the tree's canopy. Two life forms working together is called symbiosis.

Acacia trees are able to “communicate” with other trees. When browsers take a bite, the tree produces a toxin (tannin) in such large amounts it can kill antelope. It releases a gas which the wind carries to nearby trees. When the gas reaches those trees, they start producing the toxin to protect themselves from nearby browsers.



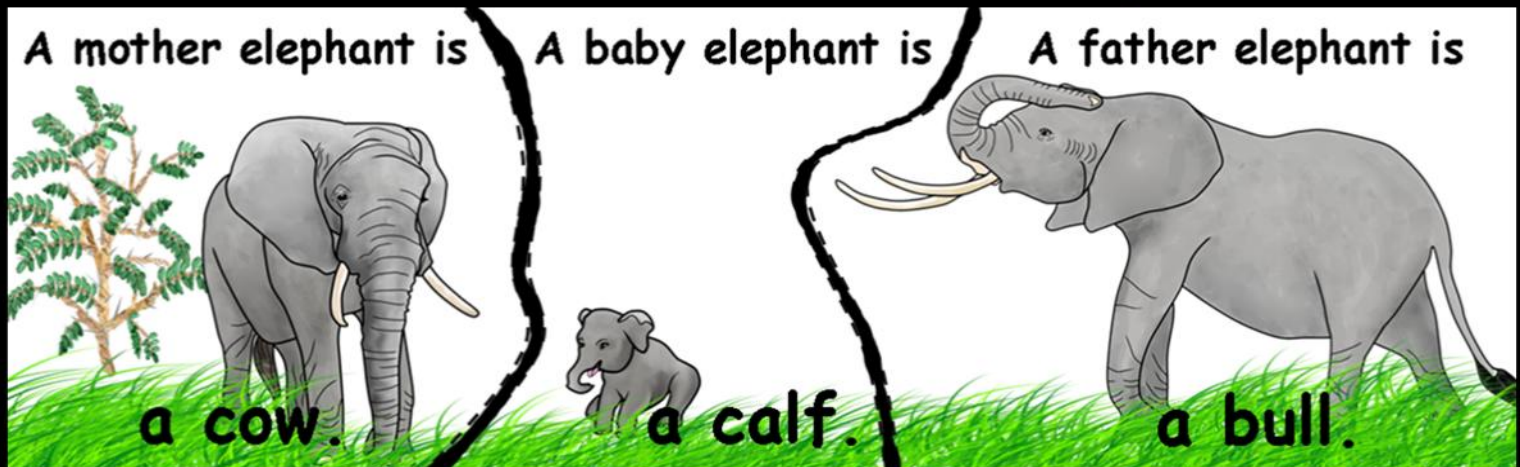
*Whistling Acacia Thorns and Ants: Photo by Pharaoh han, via Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.*

# Reading/Coloring Pages



Student blackline reading passages used for research, instruction, modeling of non-fiction writing, fluency practice, or free time exploration.

# Animal Family Matching Puzzles



**15 Sets of Animal family images depict the area of the savanna where each animal family lives. They tell the gender names of each animal in the family.**

**Grades PS, K-1, 2-3**

# Animal Groups

## What is it called?



**23 Cards depict a group of savanna animals, and list their surprising group names. Can be cut into puzzles, stapled into a booklet or made into bookmarks.**

**Grades 2-3, 4-5**

# Magnetic / Flannel Board

