



Kylie's Fossil Find: A Post-Visit Lesson

Fossils, Nonfiction Literature, Grades K-5

Background

In May 2010, a seven year girl named Kylie found a fossil near the visitor center at Badlands National Park. She did the right thing. She reported her find to rangers. It turned out to be an exceptionally rare and well-preserved saber tooth cat fossil. The fossil is both scientifically significant and of general interest to the public. The story received a lot of attention both locally and nationally.

As your students learn about fossils, this nonfiction story will help them understand the science of paleontology and the importance of protecting our natural resources. Furthermore, they may be able to better identify with the real life story of another young student.

Objective

After listening to and watching the teacher's presentation, students will be able to list and describe several events in this nonfiction story.

National Standards for Language Arts

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features

SD Standards

K.R.1.3; K.R.2.1; 1.R.3.3; 2.R.3.1; 3.LVS.1.1; 3.LVS.1.2; 4.LVS.1.1; 4.LVS.1.2; 5.LVS.1.1; 5.LVS.1.2

Materials:

- Kylie's Fossil Find PowerPoint & Script
- Paper and Pencils

Procedure

1. Show the “*Kylie’s Fossil Find*” PowerPoint to the class. Either read or summarize the accompanying script. Another option is to print the script and have students follow along, read aloud, or read independently.
2. Further discuss images from select slides. Lead a classroom discussion about Kylie and her fossil find. Discussion prompts:

Why did Kylie report her fossil find to a ranger?

What would you do if you found a fossil?

Do you think it would be fun to be a paleontologist? Why or why not?

What kinds of tools do paleontologists use?

What did saber tooth cats look like? How did the one in the story die?

Literacy Extensions

- Define the following vocabulary words from the story.
fossil, buried, butte, paleontologist, fragmented, erosion, rare, limestone, protect, excavate, lab, specimen, museum, destroyed
- Write a journal entry or reflection.
Describe how the saber tooth cat in the story died.
Tell about a family outing that you have been on.
- Create a short book based on Kylie’s fossil find. Use pictures and text from the PowerPoint or have students draw and write their own pages. Have students recall the order of the events in the story.
- Have the students research Kylie’s fossil find. Google-search “Kylie Ferguson Fossil” and see what news articles appear.

Other Resources:

These resources are available through Badlands National History Association (BNHA), a not-for-profit organization established to support education and research efforts at Badlands National Park. badlandsnha.org

- *Badlands Suite: Land of Stone and Light, From Field to Lab, Multiple Perspectives* (DVD)
- *Fossils Tell of Long Ago* by Alikei (children’s book)
- *Prehistoric Journey: A History of Life on Earth* by Kirk R. Johnson and Richard K. Stucky (children’s reference book with many pictures)

Teachers participating in a ranger-led Badlands National Park Education Outreach Program receive a 15% discount on purchases from BNHA. Discount is valid from the time a program is scheduled to one month after the program. Please provide name, school, and discount code **BIYC Education** when you place your order at badlandsnha.org.