



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
www.nps.gov/piro/forteachers.htm

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Exploring the World of Snowflakes and Tracks Winter Pre-School In-Class Activity

Michigan Science Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Based on their observations, state that snowflakes and animal tracks are not alike (Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge 3).
2. Imitate movement of animals making tracks in the snow (Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge 2).

Thinking Skills: Making analogies, comparing and contrasting.

Overview of Activity: Students explore snowflakes and animal tracks with classroom props!

National Park Connection: National Parks provide great places to find animal tracks!

Procedure:

1. Distribute copies of snowflake sheets (see appendix 1). Have the students draw a line between the two identical snowflakes. Explain that not all snowflakes are alike.
2. Distribute hand lenses and show the students how to use them. The students can practice by looking their fingerprints. Distribute snowflakes preserved in Petri dishes (see appendix 2). Have the students identify which of ten snowflakes is in each dish by comparing to the snowflake chart (see appendix 3).
3. Show the students taxidermy animal specimens you brought to the classroom. Let the students touch the animals and look closely at the different feet. Explain that, when the animals feet makes tracks when they walk in the snow. Bring in a tray of snow and demonstrate.
4. Show rubber animal feet (available from many sources) to the students. With more trays of snow, let the students make their "own" animal tracks with the rubber feet. Show pictures of the animals the rubber feet represent and explain how bigger animals make bigger tracks!
5. Explain that how an animal walks or runs determines what pattern track it might make. Imitate how a snowshoe hare runs and draw a picture of what the tracks would look like. Have each student try to hop like a hare! Next, demonstrate how the fox walks in a straight line – one foot behind the other. Have the students imitate the fox.

Thank the students for their attention. Challenge them to be on the lookout for different snowflakes and tracks wherever they travel this winter!

Materials Needed: Snowflake sheet with only two matching, chart showing ten snowflake types, mounted animal specimens, rubber animal feet, hand lens, snowflake charts, snowflakes preserved in Petri dishes, trays of snow, animal pictures, tarp to put snow trays on.

