

The Prairie Project

The third grade class had learned about the prairie, and about how it had disappeared from Illinois. They saw pictures of what it had looked like. The grass was very tall; in fact, it was more than six feet high.

They read about the prairie animals. They learned that some animals, like bison, would not be able to live again in Illinois except in the zoos. They needed many acres of land to have the grass they needed. They learned about birds that had lived there. They learned about butterflies that lived there. But they were gone. People had built farms. They herded cows. They raised chickens and pigs.

Still, the fourth grade students wanted to do something. They knew they could not get the bison to live in Illinois again. But they wanted to do what they could for the prairie. They wanted to help people see how wonderful it was. They thought they would take photos of a real prairie. But they needed to find one.

In March, they went on a field trip to the Botanic Garden. That is a place where there are many plants. They asked the field trip leader about prairies. They learned where they could get seeds to grow prairie plants. Then, just as they were getting on the bus, the leader came out to their teacher. She gave their teacher a bag. It was full of seeds. It was full of prairie plant seeds.

Back at school, they planted the seeds. They started them out in cups in their classroom. As they started to grow then the students took them outside. Their principal had said they could put the prairie garden next to the playground. So they planted there.

Soon the plants were growing higher and higher. By June, the plants were two feet tall. Some had bright flowers. Birds came and sat in the plants. When it rained, it smelled like flowers and grass. The principal said that some of the birds had been making nests in the plants. The students were proud of what they had done.

Then, when they came back to school in August, there was a great surprise. The plants were six feet high. They had brought back the prairie. They took photos. They showed them to people. They said, "See how tall the grass is. You can't see it, but birds live here. So do insects. It is a natural habitat."

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

These are questions you can ask and answer about any story. Write your answers on another page.

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story? Why?