

# Bosque Mystery Scene Writing and Craft Project

## ACTIVITY 2

### Materials Per Group:

- Rio Bosque Cards
- Ernie and Carmen's Animal Observation Guide
- dictionary (Spanish/English or English)
- markers
- chart paper
- Rio Bosque Animal Footprint Sheets
- paper and pencil
- thick cardboard (like from a cardboard box)
- plastic or styrofoam cups
- 5 different colors of tempera paint (except brown)
- flat trays, paper plates
- scissors
- foam modeling clay
- miscellaneous materials to create stamps such as pipe cleaners
- foam plates or recycled foam take-out boxes
- water
- roll of brown or tan butcher paper (craft paper) 10ft
- roll of blue butcher paper (craft paper) 10ft
- pen

### ELABORATE: What happened at the Rio Bosque?

Water is a precious resource that all animals need to survive. Many animals at the Rio Bosque Park come to the water's edge to drink, and others do their hunting while they are there. In this activity students will work in groups to compose a composition about A Day (or Night) at the Bosque. Imagining that they have the ability to visit the Rio Bosque at any time, day or night of the year. They will write a short story (2-4 paragraphs) about the animals that they see coming to the edge of the water at one of the Bosque's cells. Students will then create a scene based on this composition, showing the footprints of the animals that visited the water's edge. Once each group has created their footprint scene, the groups will read the anonymous stories and then try to guess which composition matches which scene based on the footprints and clues left in the scenery created.

### Creating the Group Composition

1. The Teacher will divide students into groups of 4-5 students. Students will close their eyes and imagine a particular time of year (season) that they would like to visit the bosque. Based on what they already know about El Paso, what is the weather like? Temperature? How would the plants look? Would they be green or brown and dormant? Would they be flowering? What is the water like at the Bosque this time of year? Are the cells filled with water or are they only small ponds? Remember that the cells are filled with water for the winter. The winding river and the smaller water cells are the focus for the water in the summer months. This will be the setting of a group composition about a day (or night) at the bosque.
2. Students will choose 4-6 animals that will visit the edge of the water at the bosque at the time of year that they choose.
3. Using the information from the cards they will note what time of day the animals are active and what time of year they are present at the Rio Bosque.

4. Students should be careful to select animals that would

#### Foam Clay Footprint Stamps

1. Cut out the footprint stencil for the animal, being careful not to cut out the individual shapes that make up the print
2. Using the foam clay, create the shape of the footprint on the stencil be present and active at the park for the time of year that they have selected.
5. Once they have chosen 4-5 animals (one per student in the group), the students will then begin to compose their composition using all the information that they have gathered. Here is a sample composition:

The sun is dawning at the Rio Bosque Wetlands park, and even though the beaver is just settling in for a rest after a night of eating cattails, a jackrabbit emerges from his burrow and hops quickly to the edge of the water, his ears moving back and forth trying to detect sounds from the brush. He hears a twig snap and leaps away quickly to a safe hiding place. A raccoon emerges from out of the shadows of the tall cattails. In his hands he has the egg of a northern shoveler from a nest that he found among the reeds. He eats the egg and then wanders to the edge of the water feeling around for anything that he might find in the water.

The raccoon hears a low growl and freezes in his tracks as a gray wolf leaps down from a nearby tree and chases after a small kangaroo rat making his way towards his burrow. Although he pounces, he misses, and the kangaroo rat pops into his burrow as the sun begins to rise and another day begins at the Rio Bosque.

Once the group has written their composition, they will use the story to create a scene to match the action that took place.

#### Creating the Mystery Scene

Before class prep:

- Each group will need a 10ft pre-measured roll of blue craft paper and brown craft paper to be used to create the bank along the water.
- To save time, the teacher can pre-cut the cardboard circles that will be mounted on the paper/plastic cups. The circles should be larger than the circumference of the mouth of the cup. Each student may need to make up to four stamps depending on the animal.
- A supply area can be created for students that would contain glue bottles, scissors and premeasured paper plates containing tempera paint.

Student groups will create a Mystery Scene at the bosque that matches the story that the group has written. To make the mystery scene, students will use

colored craft paper, footprint stamps and tempera paint. For a demonstration of how to create this mystery scene, please refer to the Mystery Scene video.

Students will search the footprint sheets for a set of the footprints to the animals described in their story. Each student in the group will create footprint stamps for their chosen animal.

Students can create the footprint stamps in one of two ways: with recycled meat trays or takeout boxes made of Styrofoam or by using foam clay that can be purchased at any dollar store.

3. Create a circular foam backing and apply that shape to the footprint shape to create a stamp
4. Allow the foam clay to dry (about 24 hours)
5. Once the foam clay has dried, using tacky glue, glue the foam backing onto the center of a cardboard circle. Once this glue is dry, glue the cardboard circle to the lip of a plastic cup. The plastic cup will serve as a handle for the stamp.
6. Repeat this process to create left and right foot stamps as well as front and hind foot stamps. Take care to label the stamps so that it is clear which is the right and left foot.

### **Recycled Styrofoam Stamps**

1. Cut out two footprint stencils for each print of the animal, being careful not to cut out the individual shapes that make up the print.
2. If using recycled foam plates, boxes or meat trays, wash and dry the Styrofoam first before using it to make the stamp.
3. Place the footprint stencil on the Styrofoam. It can be taped in place to stop the stencil from moving. Trace the shape of the footprint with a pen to leave an indented image of the footprint on the Styrofoam.
4. Glue the second stencil onto the cardboard circle using the tacky glue.
5. Remove the stencil from the Styrofoam and using scissors, carefully cut out the footprint shapes.
6. Glue the Styrofoam shapes onto the cardboard circle matching up the Styrofoam shapes to the stencil. If using thin Styrofoam, you can glue an additional shape layer to the stamp to create height.
7. Label the stamps for the left foot and right foot of the animal.
8. Repeat the process to create left and right foot and front and hind feet.

### **Creating the Bosque Mystery Scene**

1. Students will roll out the brown and blue craft paper onto the floor, being careful to overlap the blue paper over the brown paper. The blue paper represents the water at

- the Bosque and the brown paper represents the ground.
2. To give the water a more realistic effect, the blue paper can be shaped in a curvy fashion along the banks of the cell (or river),
  3. Using the tacky glue, the student will glue the blue paper overlapping the edge of the brown paper.
  4. The students will read the passage that they wrote and then proceed to use the animal stamps to create the footprints of the animals in the order they are described. Each animal will be assigned its own tempera paint color. Allow each set of footprints to dry before adding another layer of footprints. Footprints may overlap depending on the story and the layering may actually help the groups determine which animal came first, second, etc.
  5. Students may use markers or crayons to create pictures of grass and shrubs in the scene
  6. Remember to not create footprints in the water area.
  7. Once all of the mystery scenes are created, the teacher can read the stories to the class and the students can investigate each scene and try to determine which story went to each mystery scene.

**Alternative ideas for stamps:**

Small bird and insect stamps may be hard to recreate with Styrofoam or foam clay. Other materials for making stamps may include: toothpicks, pipe cleaner, rice, spaghetti or any material that can be glued onto the cardboard circles to create shapes of bird feet, insect leg imprints or tail imprints.

**EVALUATE:**

Teacher will use their own testing materials to evaluate the learning of standards 4.9A and 4.9B.