



## A Lesson on Seasons on the Prairie by Charity Knowles

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** prairies, plants, animals, habitats,

**Lesson Description:** This is a fourth grade lesson about prairies. Through the activities students can draw inferences by reading the text, develop different opinions about certain topics, and use higher order thinking to express ideas and facts.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.9: Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.10: By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### Seasons on the Prairie

by

**Content:** The prairie is a place where plants have lived for hundreds of years. If you see a natural prairie in different seasons, you see bright flowers and tall grasses. In early spring you see shooting stars and violets, and the spring grasses begin to grow. The prairie is very wet then since winter snows melt and leave ponds. There are two kinds of prairie grasses, one that grows a lot in spring, another that grows a lot in summer.

In summer the grasses are so tall you can't see low-growing flowers, but you do see the tall black-eyed Susan. Summer was the prairie's biggest season. In summer, there was so much tall grass that people called it a sea of grass that grew as tall as people. When pioneers were in the prairie, sometimes they got lost and would use a very tall plant called the compass plant to find their way. The compass plant's leaves turned during the day to follow the sunlight. Thousands of animals lived in this grassy area, including bison that grazed on the plants.

In autumn, more flowers bloom the asters brighten the prairie. The leaves of many prairie plants turn gold in autumn as the grasses dry. In autumn, when the grasses are dry, natural fires take place. Those fires start by lightning. Acres and acres of prairie can burn in one natural fire. When the grasses burn, the native prairie plants do not die. In fact, the fires help the grasses keep the prairie for themselves. Most plants, especially trees, depend on their tips to grow. You'll see that trees have new buds in spring, and that is where they grow. If a tree loses its branches, it will not grow again. But grasses do not need their leaves to grow back. They grow from their roots, and the fires do not burn those roots. So every year, the lightning fires are like gardeners weeding the prairie of plants that do not grow there. The prairie plants were like gardeners, too, because as their leaves died they fertilized the soil.

Some prairie animals migrate in winter to warmer places where they will find food. Some stay in the prairie through winter. And some hibernate. For example, some frogs dig holes under the ground and sleep through the cold prairie winter. Thousands of bison and hundreds of birds and other animals that used to live in this area are gone, but they did not migrate. They left because their habitat was destroyed. There is hope for the prairie, those animals will be able to live in this area again. People are restoring the prairie at Midewin National Tallgrass prairie. One day that area will look as it did when the bison lived there and the Potawatomi hunted here.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** prairie **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author says, "The prairie is a place where plants have lived for hundreds of years." What does the word 'prairie' mean?

- A:** A place where a lot of trees grow.
- B:** A flat grassland with animals and flowers.
- C:** A wetland with marshes.
- D:** A dry desert where no vegetation grows.

**Question:** Which of the following sentences uses the word 'prairie' correctly?

- A:** We recited a prairie in church today.
  - B:** A prairie is a top of a mountain.
  - C:** A groundhog lives on a prairie.
  - D:** In Mississippi the prairie is a huge lake.
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**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** migrate **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author said, "Some prairie animals migrate in winter to warmer places where they will find food." What does the word 'migrate' mean?

- A:** Animals switching homes without moving.
- B:** Animals moving to the North Pole.
- C:** Animals moving because they feel like it.
- D:** Animals moving to find a warmer place to stay.

**Question:** Which of the following sentences uses the word 'migrate' correctly?

- A:** The birds will migrate to the south when it becomes colder out.
  - B:** I will migrate to the kitchen to get a drink.
  - C:** My Mom migrates her car to work every morning.
  - D:** I had a really bad migrate yesterday.
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**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** adapted **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author said, "The cactus can live there. It has adapted to that hot, dry climate." What does the word 'adapted' mean?

- A:** Something that lives in a hot, dry climate
- B:** Learned to survive in a particular setting.
- C:** Something that doesn't need a lot of water.
- D:** A certain type of cactus.

**Question:** Which of the following sentences uses the word 'adapted' right?

- A:** I adapted to the cold by wearing a bathing suit.
  - B:** The birds adapted to the winter by staying where it is cold.
  - C:** The bears have adapted by living in brick houses.
  - D:** The animals have adapted to the hot, dry climate of the prairie.
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**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Thrive **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author said, "They do not just survive. They thrive." What does 'thrive' mean?

- A:** Not growing or developing at all.
- B:** Growing or developing very poorly.
- C:** Growing or developing very well.
- D:** Staying the same.

**Question:** Which of the following sentences uses the word 'thrive' correctly?

- A:** Flowers thrive when they receive a lot of sunshine and water.
  - B:** Bees thrive when they produce no honey.
  - C:** The world would thrive without the sun.
  - D:** I will thrive if I lived in the ocean.
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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - Thousands of animals left the prairie...

In the story the author says, Thousands of bison and hundreds of birds and other animals that used to live in this area are gone, but they did not migrate. They left because their habitat was destroyed. What do they mean when they said their habitat (place of living) was 'destroyed'? What are some things you can do to help restore an animal's habitat?

### 2 - Different plants in the seasons...

In the story they describe different plants that appear in different seasons. What is the difference between the plants in the season of summer and autumn?

### 3 - Different animals on the prairie...

In the story they talk about the different animals that live on the prairie. What do these animals do? What are some animals that you think might live on a prairie??

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### Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** You are to write and post here 500 words?essay about life on?a prairie. Re-read the text if necessary to draw clues about life on the prairie. How do the plants grow? How do the animals live? What are prairies known for? Consider your discussions earlier in the activity and use that to support your answer. Make sure to provide specific examples.

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