

# Home School Parent Outline: 3-5

# Tallgrass Prairie

**Start Up:** Prairie Bingo, prairie animal mounts, prairie posters  
Make nametags.

**Welcome/** Staff/Volunteer Names. General overview of the nature center.

**Introduction:** **Today's Topic- Tallgrass Prairie**  
**Question: How is Prairie different from pasture land?**

**Ice Breaker/** **Name Game-** Each student gives their name and their favorite fall flower.  
**Game:** **The Pretzel-**Students untangle themselves from a human knot.

**Background/** **Tallgrass Prairie-**A vast expanse of mostly grasses and other plants.  
**Exploration:** How and when it formed. Why prairie? Importance of fire. Kinds of prairie.  
**Animal interview-** Discuss the adaptations of a prairie animal.

**Trail Talk:** **Trail Rules. Predictions-**What animals, plants will we find? What will it be like?  
**Prepare to** Restroom break.  
**go Outside:** Apply: Sunscreen, Bug Repellent

**OUTDOOR** Hike to a prairie. Ask the students what they think of the prairie.  
**EXPLORATION:** What animals lived on the prairie? (bison, elk, etc.) Which are still here?  
Who lived here? Native American life in our area. Explorers & pioneers.  
**Prairie History:** Short historical accounts of the prairie.  
**Fire-** How it helps the prairie. Fire suppression. How prairie builds soil.

**Game:** **Prairie Animal Adaptations**  
Fox & Rabbit  
**Prairie Plant Adaptations**  
Three main plant groups on prairie-Grasses, Asters, Bean/Legume family.  
**Activity:** Food Web

**Activity:** **Seed Dispersal:** Plant adaptations for spreading seeds.  
**Prairie Seed Collection**

**SEND OFF:** Goodbye!  
**Next Month-Woodlands**

**Take Home:** Word Search, prairie map  
At home activities  
Parent Outline

## Vocabulary

Ecosystem, prairie, ecology, savanna, adaptation, dispersal, rain shadow, forb, nocturnal, diurnal, ecosystem

## Prairie References

- Iowa's Biological Communities*. 1993. Iowa Association of Naturalists Booklet Series. ISU Press, Ames, IA.  
Iowa's Biological Communities (IAN-201), Iowa Prairies (IAN-203)  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/wi.htm>
- Johnson, Rebecca L. 2001. *A Walk in the Prairie*. Carolrhoda Books, Inc., Minneapolis. A biome book.
- Lerner, Carol. 1980. *Seasons of the Tallgrass Prairie*. William Morrow and Company, NY.
- Madson, John. 1982. *Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.
- Runkel, S.T., and Roosa, D. M. 1989. *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*. Iowa State University Press, Ames.  
Good photographs, basic information, and food/medicinal uses of each plant.