



Mustelids

JK to Grade 3

Word Search



- AQUATIC
- BURROW
- CARNIVORE
- CONIFEROUS
- DEN

- LAKES
- MINK
- OTTER
- PONDS
- SWIM

- TRAPPER
- WEASEL





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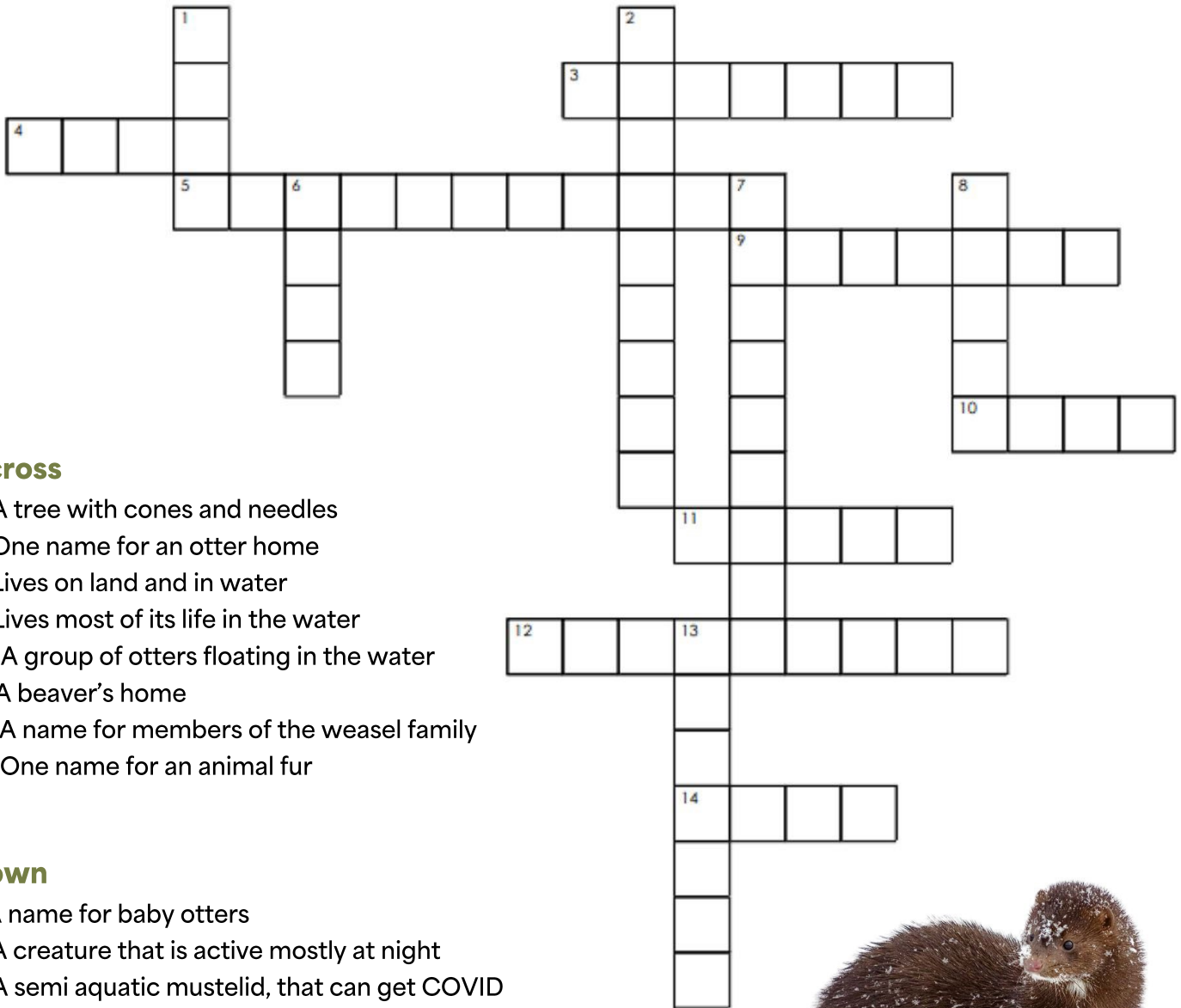


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Mustelids

Grades 4 to 8

Crossword puzzle



Across

- 3. A tree with cones and needles
- 4. One name for an otter home
- 5. Lives on land and in water
- 9. Lives most of its life in the water
- 10. A group of otters floating in the water
- 11. A beaver's home
- 12. A name for members of the weasel family
- 14. One name for an animal fur

Down

- 1. A name for baby otters
- 2. A creature that is active mostly at night
- 6. A semi aquatic mustelid, that can get COVID
- 7. An animal that eats only met
- 8. An aquatic mustelid
- 13. Someone who sets traps for mammals



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Walk like a mink, walk like an otter (20 mins.)



A fun physical activity that let students imitate the two ways these species walk.

What you'll need:

A room or space big enough for the whole class to be able to move across.

Setup:

Watch a video or two online with the class to show the students how River Otters and Mink walk. Then spread the students out so they can "walk" in a line. (Hint: on sand, mud, or snow the students can examine the pattern of their tracks)

Activity:

Explain that River Otters walk two ways (they are bounders when they move fast and they are also diagonal, or perfect walkers when they move slowly). Mink are bounders and they walk similar to the way a River Otter moves when moving swiftly. Explain that each student will be attempting to walk as Bounders and Diagonal walkers.

First, students will need to get onto all fours (with their hands serving as front paws and their knees serving as rear paws). As diagonal walkers they will "walk" by moving their right front foot and rear left foot at the same time. then their left front foot and

right rear foot together, and so on. Explain that this is how many creatures move, such as cats, dogs, deer and more. they make a straight left foot, right foot pattern of tracks.

Next explain that they will walk like "Bounders." To do so on all fours they will move both front feet forward at the same time with a lunging motion, then quickly bring both rear feet forward just behind their front feet. Then move front feet forward again, then the rear feet. Explain that bounders make an evenly spaced, box like pattern of tracks, with left and right paws side-by-side. Congrats they have now learned to move like Otters and Mink!

You otter have fun (15 mins.)



What you'll need:

Chart paper or board, marker

Activity:

Write the word 'Otters' at the top of the page/board. Explain that Otters play, slide and romp together to form social bonds, practice hunting skills, for fun, and more. Have students discuss the ways they play and list them on the board. Brainstorm together some of the reasons they play together and draw connections to the ways Otters interact in this manner.



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What environmental factors do aquatic mustelids require (25 mins.)



Learn and discuss biotic and abiotic factors that affect where otter and mink habitats.

What you'll need:

A dry erase board and markers.

Setup:

You will want to set up the dry erase board with two columns, titled "Biotic" and "Abiotic."

Activity:

Explain that there are many environmental factors that must be in balance in order to have appropriate habitat for River Otters and Mink to not only survive, but to thrive. Explain the concepts of biotic and abiotic factors that play a part in each and every balance biome.

Biotic factors are living or once-living organisms in the ecosystem. These are obtained from the biosphere and are capable of reproduction. Examples of biotic factors are animals, birds, plants, fungi, and other similar organisms.

Abiotic factors refer to non-living physical and chemical elements in the ecosystem. Abiotic re-

sources are usually obtained from the lithosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere. Examples of abiotic factors are water, air, soil, sunlight, and minerals.

Begin by having students list off specific Biotic factors that would help to support Aquatic Mustelids in a specific area. Then have students list off Abiotic factors which would support Aquatic Mustelids.

Remember, Mink and River Otters do spend much of their time in the water but they also require other land based elements in order to thrive. If it is helpful, review the Aquatic Mustelid Virtual Lesson again in order to prompt some more ideas and discussion.

Next, begin a discussion analyzing what would happen if one or more of these elements were not present in the environment? How would a missing element affect the area's ability to support Aquatic Mustelid life? Would this affect other creatures that may be present?



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