



# Wetlands Environments and Ecosystems

## Social Studies Concept: The United States Wetlands

- *Wetlands* are unique lands covered in water.
- There are different types of *wetlands*, such as *marshes*, *swamps*, and *bogs*.
- *Wetlands* are very important to the environment because they support diverse life and offer protection against flood damage.

### Key Vocabulary

- wetlands
- marsh
- swamp
- bog

**Lesson Options:** Create lesson plans to create a single-day or multiday lesson.

### Lesson Elements

**Digital Playlist:** Generally, children will complete the Digital Playlist first, then follow up with some or all of the activities described below. As you select and do those activities with your child, you may wish to reassign some or all of the digital activities for additional practice.

**Explore Activity:** This follow-up is designed to be used closely with the Digital Playlist to help your child understand the topic.

**Dig Deeper Activity:** This offline activity provides an additional learning experience with the same topic.

**Extend Activity:** This offline activity extends the child's understanding and application of the same topic.

## Explore Activity

### Set Up

1. Gather the materials listed.
2. Draw a three-column chart on paper. Label each column *Marsh*, *Swamp*, and *Bog*.

### Materials

- Large piece of paper
- Markers or crayons

<i>Marsh</i>	<i>Swamp</i>	<i>Bog</i>



### Procedure

1. Have your child watch *A Visit to the United States Wetlands with Carla*.
2. Discuss the video *A Visit to the United States Wetlands with Carla*. Ask: *What three types of wetlands are mentioned in the video?*  
**Sample answer:** “Bogs, marshes, swamps”
3. Display the *wetland* chart and read the titles. Remind your child that there are different characteristics associated with each type of *wetland*.
4. Prompt your child to use the video and information found on the internet to fill in each column of the chart. For example, they might add the following terms to the “*Marsh*” column: cordgrass, fresh or salt water, clams, crabs, egrets.
5. Encourage your child to add pictures or illustrations to their chart.
6. Discuss the following question: *What is the most interesting thing you have learned about the wetlands so far?*

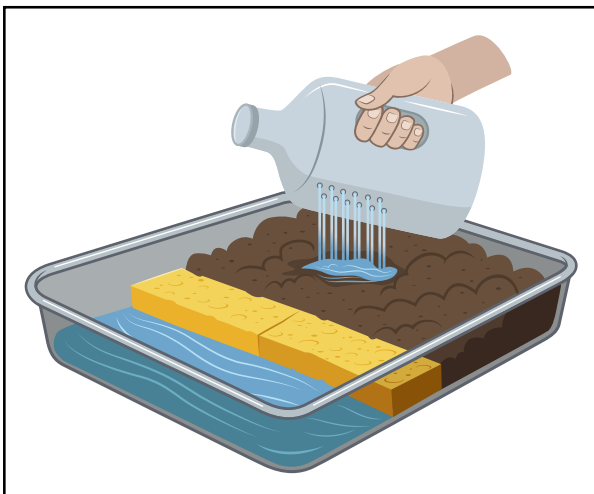
## Dig Deeper Activity

### Set Up

1. Gather the materials on the list.
2. Ask your child to play *What Do You See? Wetlands*.

### Procedure

1. Explain to your child that they will build a *wetlands* model. Discuss how *wetlands* are helpful because they soak up water from the environment and slowly release it to prevent flooding.
2. Invite your child to place the sponges in the middle of the pan. Fill in any gaps with grass or rocks. Explain how the sponges act like *wetlands*.



### Materials

- Paint tray or oblong pan
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Modeling dough
- Soil or coffee grounds
- Drink powder or colored sprinkles
- Two sponges
- Grass or small plants (optional)
- Rocks and sticks (optional)



## Maps and Landmarks

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3. Ask your child to press the dough into one side of the pan. Remind them to press it deeply against the sides. Then, add sticks, rocks, and grass on top of the dough. Explain that the dough represents land.
4. Sprinkle soil on top of the dough. Add drink powder or sprinkles to represent fine sediment.
5. Invite your child to spray the dough thoroughly with water, as if it were raining. They should continue spraying until the dough is very wet. Ask: *What do you notice is starting to happen?*
6. Ask your child to remove the sponges and observe what happens. They may need to add more water. Discuss the following questions: *How do the sponges act like wetlands? Did they prevent water and sediment from flowing into the empty section of the pan?*

**Sample answer:** "Sponges absorb water just like *wetlands*. They stopped water from flowing."

7. Review what you have learned in the lesson. Ask: *What would happen if wetland areas were destroyed?*

**Sample answer:** "Flooding would increase."

## Extend Activity

### Set Up

1. Gather the materials on the list.
2. Display photos or illustrations of United States *wetlands*, including some commonly found animals and insects similar to the following:



### Materials

- Poster board
- Markers or crayons
- Photos or illustrations of United States *wetlands* animals, plants, and trees or ones found on the internet
- Tape or glue



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## Procedure

1. Have your child rewatch the video *A Visit to the United States Wetlands with Carla*.
2. Explain to your child that a travel poster is designed to entice people to visit a location. Discuss how they will create a travel poster about United States *wetlands*.
3. Invite your child to create a title for their poster.
4. Display some of the photos and illustrations of United States *wetlands*. If desired, assist your child as they search for more pictures of *wetlands* and animals on the internet, such as the northern river terrapin, saltwater crocodile, and grey crowned crane. Add them to the poster. Alternatively, have your child draw their own illustrations.
5. Prompt your child to write sentences about what they know or learned about *wetlands*. Remind them to ask people to visit. Have your child dictate their sentences to you, if necessary.
6. Invite your child to present the travel poster to others.
7. Reflect on the past activities. Ask: *Why do we need wetlands?*



## MODIFICATIONS

Beginning Learner	Advanced Learner
Your child will benefit from looking at several photos of <i>wetlands</i> on the internet or in books. Many children have never seen a <i>wetland</i> area, so additional photos will help build background knowledge. Reading aloud books on <i>wetlands</i> to beginning learners can also help them understand how <i>wetlands</i> are unique and why <i>wetlands</i> are important.	Your child may be ready to locate <i>wetland</i> areas on a map. Provide a United States and world map. Invite your child to research some of the most well-known <i>wetlands</i> and find them on the maps.

### Signs of Success and Needs

One sign that your child understands *wetlands* is they will include significant information about them on their travel poster. Look for information about *wetland* types, animals, and environmental importance. Understanding their impact is essential knowledge.

Children may struggle understanding the impact *wetlands* have on the environment. Explain how they support a diversity of life and the animals or insects that live there would not thrive outside of the *wetlands*. In addition, show children pictures of flooded areas. Help them understand the impact of flooding on humans. *Wetlands* are natural barriers from floods.

Our activities are designed to be safe with adult supervision. Please follow directions carefully.