

Instructor Sheet
“How to Catch a Cat” Guide
Lesson 7

1 of 2

Grade Level(s): Middle

Duration: Several 45-60 minute periods

Setting: Indoors, use computer to find facts, students create a full-color manual that could lead up to a Florida panther capture

Skills: Research, web navigation, writing, reading, recognizing, listening, small group work

Subject Areas: Social studies, environmental science, life science, language arts, visual arts

Overview: Student teams work to create a Cat Capture manual. The manual will include information on south Florida’s geography and environment, history of the Florida panther, characteristics of the panther, materials needed for a capture and a vet exam, and medical information necessary for them to participate in the vet exam.

Site location(s):

Habitat:

Habitat Review

Current Range (download southwest Florida map)

Natural History: Real Ranges

Home: Coryi Cinema (Vet Exam)

Threats: Habitat Loss

Sunshine State Standards:

Grades 6-8

SC.D.2.3.2. knows the positive and negative consequences of human action on the Earth’s systems.

SC.F.1.3.7 knows that behavior is a response to the environment and influences growth, development, maintenance and reproduction.

SC.F.2.3.2 knows that the variation in each species is due to the exchange and interaction of genetic information as it passed from parent to offspring.

SC.F.2.3.3 knows that generally organisms in a population live long enough to reproduce because they have survival characteristics.

SC.G.1.3.3 understands that the classification of living things is based on a given set of criteria and is a tool for understanding biodiversity and relationships.

SC.G.2.3.4 understands that humans are a part of an ecosystem and their activities may deliberately or inadvertently alter the equilibrium in ecosystems.

LA.A.1.3.4 uses strategies to clarify meaning, such as rereading, note taking, summarizing, outlining, and writing a grade-level appropriate report.

LA.A.2.3.5 locates, organizes, and interprets written information for a variety of purposes, including classroom research, collaborative decision making, and performing a school or real-world task.

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LA.B.2.3.4 uses electronic technology including databases and software to gather information and communicate new knowledge.

SS.B.1.3.1 uses various map forms (including thematic maps) and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report geographic information including patterns of land use, connections between places, and patterns and processes of migration and diffusion.

SS.B.2.3.6 understands the environmental consequences of people changing the physical environment in various world locations.

VA.A.1.3.3 understands what makes various organizational elements and principles of design effective and ineffective in the communication of ideas.

VA.B.1.3.2 knows how the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes can be used to enhance communication of experiences and ideas.

VA.B.1.3.4 knows and uses the interrelated elements of art and the principles of design to improve the communication of ideas.

The Activity

Pre-planning:

1. Reserve a computer lab or set up computers in your classroom.
2. Photocopy student sheets.
3. Assemble materials for student booklets, such as: hole punches, rulers, glue, ribbon, string or yarn, cover stock paper (for covers), tape, glitter, markers, colored pencils, etc.
4. Display a large map of Florida, preferably one with natural areas and counties designated.

Procedure:

1. Assign computers and teams.
2. Hand out student sheets and describe rubric for grading booklets.

Assessment:

Up to 5 bonus points for student adding original artwork/extra decorations to their booklets

Final Project Assessment (by instructor or teams of students)

Total points to be determined by the number of days spent on the project (for example, 5 days = 100 points)

A+ = Exceptional! All work complete, correct, neat and appealing.

A = Very Good. Almost all work complete, correct, neat and appealing.

B = Good. Most of work complete, neat and appealing.

C = Satisfactory. More than half of work complete, finished components are correct and attractive.

D = Unsatisfactory. Up to half of work complete, work lacks detail and polish.

F = Unacceptable. Less than half complete or components are unacceptable.

Student Sheet
“How to Catch a Cat” Guide
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Name(s) _____

Class _____
Date _____

Directions: You will have several class periods to create an interesting, eye-catching, research-based Cat Capture manual. Sections of the manual will include information on south Florida’s geography and environment, history of the Florida panther, characteristics and habits of the panther, and materials needed for a vet capture and exam.

I. Getting Started

1. Read through the entire directions and questions before you start on the individual tasks. This will help you to figure out what topics most interest you and match your abilities.
2. Decide how you divide up the tasks for the Cat Capture manual to meet the time deadline of your instructor and what your standards will be. If you desire, choose a team captain to help keep the project on track. Decide together how you will choose your tasks, and what you will do if students are absent or do not meet their deadlines. Put your Team Contract in writing and have all team members sign it.
3. You will create a cover for your manual with an original title, names of the authors, and artwork. You may do this now or as you wrap up your research.

II. Geography

Directions: Print out the southwest Florida map, site location Habitat: Current Range (If this is not possible, use an alternate map provided by your teacher.)

On this map:

1. Locate and highlight (in colored pencils or markers) preserves and natural areas that contain habitat for Florida panthers.
2. What cities and roads do you think are most likely to impact these managed areas?
3. What effects do roads and development have on the Florida panther?

Site locations:

Threats: Habitat Fragmentation

Coryi Cinema: Crossings (video)

4. How do you think panthers could travel safely between large blocks of forested land?

Site locations:

Coryi Cinema: Private Lands and Panther Survival (video)

Habitat: Private Lands

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5. Write a plan for how you and your teammates will get to the capture site from your current location.

III. South Florida Environment

1. What is the average temperature and monthly rainfall for south Florida at this time of the year?

Site location: Habitat: Climate

2. Investigate two of the natural communities in which you might find a Florida panther. For each one, list characteristic plants and animals, as well as some threatened or endangered animals that share the habitat of the panther.

Site locations:

Habitat:

Natural Communities (Pinelands or Cypress Swamp or Prairies, etc.)

Habitat Use

3. Make a packing list of the clothes, personal items and gear you will need for several days in the field (camping).

IV. History of Florida Panthers in Florida

1. Why were panthers originally hunted? Who hunted them?

Site location: Conservation: 1800-1899

2. When was the hunting of Florida panthers first regulated? By whom?

Site location: Conservation: 1940-1959

3. When were Florida panthers first federally listed as endangered? What was the legislation called?

Site location: Conservation: 1960-1979

4. What series of events led to you and your team being able to take part in the capture, collaring, and examination of the Florida panther?

Site locations:

Conservation: 1980-1989

1990-present

5. Write a paragraph detailing two specific steps that were taken to try to help the Florida panther.

Site locations:

Conservation: 1980-1989

1990-present

IV. Characteristics and Habits of the Florida Panther

1. Draw a picture or print out a photo of the Florida panther and identify and describe its special characteristics

Site locations:

Natural History:

Physical Description

Scientific Classification

2. How many adult panthers are estimated to be in Florida?

Site location: Natural History: Range of the Panther

3. Explain how much food panthers need to survive, what they eat, and how they obtain their food.

Site locations:

Natural History:

Diet

Hunting Methods

4. What are the social habits of panthers?

Site locations:

Natural History:

Behavior

Home Ranges

V. Materials and Personnel Needed for a Vet Capture/Exam

1. Assemble a list of all of the materials/people needed to track down and capture a Florida panther.

Site location: Coryi Cinema (Vet Exam)

2. Create a timeline of your virtual trip and the major events (expected) once you get there.

3. Choose one of the field notes descriptions to explore the types of information that biologists keep track of out in the field. Then, write a set of field notes of your virtual trip.

Site location: Field Notes