

Safari Niagara Education Stations – Educator Overview

Purpose

Safari Niagara's Education Stations are designed as interactive, curriculum-connected learning experiences for visiting school groups. Each station is facilitated by one Safari Niagara Educator and is intended to provide a 10–15-minute drop-in presentation that encourages inquiry, observation, discussion, and hands-on learning.

The stations support experiential learning through activities, artefacts, educational signage, and guided conversation. While the content aligns with Ontario curriculum expectations, the primary goal is to foster curiosity about the natural world and encourage students to make connections between classroom learning and real-world examples.

Education Stations

Animal Adaptations Education Station

Students explore how animals survive in their environments through physical and behavioural adaptations. Topics may include structural adaptations, camouflage, classification, habitat relationships, and the connection between form and function.

Pollinator Garden Education Station

Students explore the relationships between plants, pollinators, habitats, biodiversity, and ecosystem connections. The station highlights Ontario native plants, the importance of milkweed, pollinator conservation, and Safari Niagara's role in the Monarch Highway network.

Using the Station Scripts

The station scripts are intended to guide facilitation rather than provide a word-for-word presentation. Each grade-specific section identifies:

- Relevant Ontario curriculum expectations
- A central learning focus or "big idea"
- Suggested discussion points and examples
- Connections to station activities and artefacts
- Guiding question(s) and sample responses

Educators should use these components flexibly to create engaging conversations that are appropriate for the age, interests, and prior knowledge of each group.

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Educator Expectations

When facilitating a station, educators should:

- Welcome students and introduce the station theme.
- Encourage curiosity, observation, and participation.
- Use activities, artefacts, and signage to support learning.
- Ask open-ended questions and encourage discussion.
- Adapt explanations and vocabulary to the developmental level of the group.
- Connect concepts to real-world wildlife, ecosystems, conservation, and human impacts where appropriate.
- Focus on one or two key takeaways rather than covering every detail.

Curriculum Connections

Both stations have been intentionally linked to Ontario Science and Technology curriculum expectations where meaningful connections exist.

Not all grade levels are represented within the scripts. In some cases, curriculum expectations did not provide sufficient alignment with the station content, and therefore no specific grade-level focus was developed.

Teacher Resources

A Teacher-Facing Education Station Overview is available online and outlines curriculum connections for each station. Teachers may reference this document before their visit to better understand how the stations support classroom learning outcomes.

Key Facilitation Philosophy

Education Stations are designed to be interactive conversations rather than formal lessons. Success is measured by student engagement, curiosity, participation, and meaningful connections to the natural world.

Educators should strive to create experiences that help students:

- Observe and question the world around them.
- Understand relationships within ecosystems.
- Recognize how living things meet their needs and survive.
- Appreciate biodiversity and conservation efforts.
- Connect classroom concepts to authentic examples at Safari Niagara.

The goal is to inspire learning through exploration, discussion, and discovery.