Mane Attraction classroom activities

For use with "Mane Attraction" *ASK*, March 2013, pages 6-10

Classroom Discussion Questions

Before reading

Why do you think lions have manes?

Can you think of ways manes might help lions?

Are there any problems with having a mane?

Come up with a hypothesis about why lions have manes. How would you design an experiment to test your hypothesis?

After reading/Scientific process

Are all manes the same? How are they different?

Why did Charles Darwin think lions have manes?

Did Peyton West agree with Darwin?

How do manes changes as lions get older?

What happens when a lion gets sick?

Based on those observations about age and health, what was Dr. West's hypothesis about lion manes?

Experiments need to be carefully controlled, something that's tough to do with wild lions. How did West test her hypothesis?

Did her findings support her hypothesis?

Based on West's study, why do lions have manes?

Activity

Objective: To practice recording data on mane size and quality.

Materials: pencil, paper, white board, computer with access to internet

Procedure:

1. Access images of lion manes on the Lion Mane pinterest board: https://www.pinterest.com/alisonpstevens/lion-manes/
2. As a class, look at a few photos of manes to get a feel for the variation. Don't spend a lot of time on this.
3. Together, come up with a method of classifying manes. For example, students might decide to score color on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as all light and 5 as all dark. Length/shagginess might be similarly coded.
4. Ask students to score the lion shown in each photo for both color and length.
5. Collect scores for each lion and average them.
6. Based on what the students learned from West's study, what conclusions can they draw about the lions in the photos?