

Why did the American Beaver Almost Become Extinct in the 1840s?

Make one copy for each dyad. Cut clues apart and put in an envelope. Advise groups to read through the clues and sort them into three or four groups. When clues have been sorted, students label each group, use their worksheet to record observations, form hypotheses by reviewing their observations, and then record these hypotheses on their worksheet. Students then test their hypotheses in class discussions. They can use the lines underneath each hypothesis to write improved versions.

Beavers are fur-bearing animals.	Webbed feet enable the beaver to swim
Beavers live in lakes and streams. They cut down trees to build dams.	The second layer of beaver fur is soft and glossy. It helps keep the beaver dry when swimming.
Beavers belong to the same family as gnawing animals or rodents such as rats, mice, rabbits, and squirrels.	Beavers rarely fight. They seek safety in the water.
Beavers are highly intelligent and hard-working.	In 1835, Kit Carson attended the annual mountain men gathering along the Green River in Wyoming.
Beavers can be found in wooded areas.	At the time of his death in 1848 John Jacob Astor was the wealthiest person in the United States with over \$20 million.
The North American beaver is the largest of all rodents.	In 1794 John Jacob Astor took advantage of treaties between Great Britain and the United States to open up new trading markets in Canada and the Great Lakes.
The beaver has sharp teeth it can use to chisel wood. They can cut through trees two feet thick.	Manuel Lisa was one of the founders of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company.
John Liver-Eating Johnston had a 20-year vendetta against the Crow Indians because they killed his Crow wife.	A beaver is covered with long stiff hairs on the outside.

Source: <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24295>