

Wild Things:

Exploring the Basic Needs of Animals



Grades 1–3

Using AIT Products

- *Science is Elementary*, program #2, "Let's Explore Animals"
- *Up Close and Natural*
- *Naturimages*

Overview

All living things have basic needs that must be satisfied in order to survive. This lesson introduces students to the basic needs of animals: air, food, water, and a suitable place to live. Students will watch video clips of animals in their natural environments and consider how these habitats support the animals' basic needs. Students will then conduct research about the basic needs of a specific animal and create a picture book that describes this animal.

Objectives

- Explain that most living things need air, food, water, and covering.
- Identify the ways in which an animal's habitat supports its basic needs.
- Observe the characteristics and behaviors of animals.

Vocabulary

air	predator
camouflage	protection
food	shelter
needs	water



"Any glimpse into the life of an animal quickens our own and makes it so much the larger and better in every way."

—John Muir

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Survival cards
- Pictures of a coot, frog, toad, snake, stag, newt, salamander, heron, lizard, badger, owl, woodpecker, crow, swan, turtle, raccoon, fox, woodchuck, opossum, kestrel, and skunk
- AIT video: *Science is Elementary*, program #2, “Let’s Explore Animals”
- AIT video: *Up Close and Natural*
- AIT video: *Naturimages*
- Paper
- Crayons
- *The Adventures of Marco and Polo* by Dieter Weismuller

Planning Notes

Arrange students in work groups to complete this lesson. Groups of three to five are best.

Prior to beginning this lesson, conduct a search online to find pictures of the following animals: coot, frog, toad, snake, stag, newt, salamander, heron, lizard, badger, owl, woodpecker, crow, swan, turtle, raccoon, fox, woodchuck, opossum, kestrel, and skunk.

Time

This project will take three to four 45-minute class periods.

Procedure—Day 1

Introduce Topic

Tell students to imagine that they have to live all alone on a deserted island for one month. Then

ask students to think about what they would need in order to stay alive.

Divide students into small groups and give each group a set of survival cards. Explain to students that these cards have pictures of things they can bring with them to the island. Have each group examine the cards and sort them into things they need and things they don’t need. Allow each group to share which items they put in their “need” pile and explain why they selected those items.

Tell students that all living things have basic needs that must be met in order to survive. Animals need food, water, and covering (protection from the environment and other animals).

Group Project

Assign each group one or more of the following animals: coot, frog, toad, snake, stag, newt, salamander, heron, lizard, badger, owl, woodpecker, crow, swan, turtle, raccoon, fox, woodchuck, opossum, kestrel, or skunk. Give each group pictures of their assigned animals, and have students discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of things do you think this animal eats?
- Where do you think this animal lives?
- What do you notice about this animal that helps it to live in this place?
- What else do you notice about this animal?

Explain to students that over the next few days the class will be learning more about the basic needs of animals, and each group will investigate what their assigned animal needs to stay alive.

Procedure—Day 2

Introduce New Topic

Tell students that animals need food and water in order to survive. Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion about what animals eat:

- Why do you eat?
- Why do you think animals need to eat?
- What kinds of foods do you eat?
- What kinds of things do animals eat?
- How do you get food?
- How do you think animals get their food?

Video

Cue *Science is Elementary*, program 2, “Let’s Explore Animals” to approximate time code: 00:07:45. Explain to students that they will watch a video that shows different animals. Tell them to pay close attention during the video and to write down what these animals eat. PLAY through time code 00:08:51.

After the video, use the following questions as prompts for discussion:

- What kind of food do these animals eat?
- Where do these animals get their food?
- What other interesting things did you notice about these animals?

Group Work

Have students watch the *Up Close and Natural* or *Naturimages* videos about their assigned animals, conduct research at the school library, or conduct an online search to find out what their animals eat in order to stay alive. Ask students to draw a picture that shows their animals eating

and to write one or more sentences that describe what they eat and how they get food.

Procedure—Day 3

Introduce New Topic

Tell students that animals need covering (protection from the environment and other animals) in order to stay alive. Ask students to describe what kinds of homes people live in and explain how these homes protect us from bad weather. Then have students describe some animal homes and discuss how these homes protect them from bad weather and other animals.

Video

Cue *Science is Elementary*, program 2, “Let’s Explore Animals” to approximate time code: 00:06:40. Explain to students that they will watch a video that shows different animals. Tell them to pay close attention during the video and to write down where these animals live. PLAY through time code 00:07:44.

After the video, use the following questions as prompts for discussion:

- Where do these animals live?
- How are these homes the same? How are they different?
- What features did the animals have to help them live in these places?
- What other interesting things did you notice about where these animals live?

Cue *Science is Elementary*, program 2, “Let’s Explore Animals” to approximate time code: 00:08:52. Explain to students that many animals also need protection from other animals. Then tell them that they will watch a video that shows what different animals do to protect themselves from other animals. PLAY through time code 00:10:51.

After the video, use the following questions as prompts for discussion:

- What do these animals do to protect themselves from other animals?
- What is camouflage?
- What is a predator?
- What other interesting things did you notice about these animals?

Group Work

Have students watch the *Up Close and Natural* or *Naturimages* videos about their assigned animals, conduct research at the school library, or conduct an online search to find out where their animals live. Ask students to draw a picture that shows where their animals live and to write one or more sentences that describe where the animal lives, explain how their homes support their basic needs, and describe special features their animals have in order to help them live in these places.

If time permits, allow each group to share their pictures and sentences about their animals with the class. You may also want to display them around the classroom.

Assessment

Individual Assessment

Have students draw a picture that shows one animal and the things this animal needs to stay alive. Ask students to write one sentence that describes this picture.

Group Assessment

Read *The Adventures of Marco and Polo* by Dieter Wiesmuller. Have students explain why Marco can't live in Antarctica and Polo can't live in the jungle. Ask students why the city wasn't a good place for them to live either. Then have students discuss what these animals need to stay alive.

Extension Activity

Take a walk around the school or neighborhood to look for animals. Help students learn how to observe their neighborhood while being careful of the environment. Ask students to keep a chart of what and where students make animal sightings. Back in class, have students conduct research to learn more about each animal and find out how each animal's habitat supports its basic needs.

Resources

National Parks Conservation Association: Wildlife Facts

www.npca.org/wildlife_protection/wildlife_facts

Take a closer look at the animals that inhabit our national parks, learn about the threats they face, and discover what we can do to protect them.

Wildlife Conservation Society: Kids Go Wild

www.kidsgowild.com

This Web site provides information about the behaviors and survival habits of different animals. In addition, this site has interactive games that allow students to test their knowledge about animals and newsletters that explain what kids are doing to help protect wildlife.

Kids Planet: E-Species Fact Sheets

www.kidsplanet.org/factsheets/map.html

This Web site, hosted and funded by the Defenders of Wildlife, provides information about the characteristics and behaviors of more than 50 species of animals. This site also provides information about the Endangered Species Act.

Tips for Teachers:

How to Access AIT Materials without Spending Your Own Nickel(s)

www.ait.net/technos/e-zine/tech_notes/grants.php

Survival Cards

Directions: Make one copy of these cards for each small group and cut along the lines.

