

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 20 MINS

Habitat Needs

Students brainstorm examples of familiar animals and their needs. They learn that a habitat satisfies the basic needs that must be met for an animal to survive.

GRADES

3 - 5

SUBJECTS

Biology, Geography, Physical Geography

OVERVIEW

Students brainstorm examples of familiar animals and their needs. They learn that a habitat satisfies the basic needs that must be met for an animal to survive.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/habitat-needs/>

Program



DIRECTIONS

1. Build background about habitats.

Write this definition of habitat on the board: “the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.” Ask students to brainstorm things that make up a habitat, such as water, air, trees, rain, snow, and sand. Explain to students that Earth has many habitats and that each type of habitat is unique. Provide examples of habitats, such as oceans, forests, deserts, tundra, rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Tell students that even under

water, there can be habitats such as shallow-water or deep-water zones, and that a combination of many things—including temperature, soil, available food, rainfall, and geographic location—create a habitat.

2. Have students brainstorm basic survival needs.

Ask students to brainstorm four basic survival needs that all animals require from their habitat. Prompt students to think about things that are essential for survival. Elicit from students that four basic survival needs include:

- food
- shelter from weather and predators
- water
- a place to raise young.

3. Use a think aloud to provide an example for students.

Think aloud as you provide the following example for students:

Animal: salt water crocodile

Habitat: coastal marshes, estuaries, and shallow marine waters

This animal's basic survival needs include:

- food—carnivorous (eats meat), including fish, birds, reptiles, and mammals
- shelter from weather and predators—have camouflage and can submerge for long periods of time
- water—provided by diet and from freshwater sources
- a place to raise young—female prepares and guards a nest until the young hatch and are released

4. Have students brainstorm additional examples.

Ask the class to brainstorm other examples using animals they are familiar with, such as dogs, cats, hamsters, birds, or horses. For each example, discuss the animal's habitat and basic survival needs. Continue until students have grasped the concept.

Extending the Learning

For an increased challenge, have students brainstorm the basic survival needs of animals from a variety of habitats, such as the jungle, Arctic, desert, or Alpine regions.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Biology

Geography

- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- define the term
- describe the four basic survival needs of all animals

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 8:

The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems and biomes on Earth's surface;

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

- (K-4) Standard C-1:

The characteristics of organisms

- (K-4) Standard C-3:

Organisms and environments

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

A *habitat* is the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows. Understanding animals' basic survival needs helps you understand the characteristics of their habitats.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Deep-Sea Ecosystems: Extreme Living](#)

Vocabulary

| Term | Part of Speech | Definition |
|----------|----------------|---|
| habitat | <i>noun</i> | environment where an organism lives throughout the year or for shorter periods of time. |
| predator | <i>noun</i> | animal that hunts other animals for food. |
| shelter | <i>noun</i> | structure that protects people or other organisms from weather and other dangers. |
| young | <i>noun</i> | offspring or children. |

For Further Exploration

Websites

- [National Geographic: Sea Monsters—A Prehistoric Adventure](#)

FUNDER



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