

SCIENCE

Kindergarten Standard Supported

- **NGSS ESS3.A: Natural Resources:** Living things need water, air, and resources from the land, and they live in places that have the things they need. Humans use natural resources for everything they do. (K-ESS3-1)

First Grade Standard Supported

- **NGSS LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms:** Adult plants and animals can have young. In many kinds of animals, parents and the offspring themselves engage in behaviors that help the offspring to survive. (1-LS1-2)

What You Will Need

- Science Master (page 9)

Science Background

Sloths are slow, sluggish mammals that live in the tropical rainforests of Central and South America. They have long arms and wiry, shaggy fur. They look a bit like monkeys. But sloths are actually related to armadillos and anteaters.

There are two main species of sloths: two-fingered sloths and three-fingered sloths. Some sources call them two-toed and three-toed sloths instead. Either way, the name refers to the number of claws a sloth has.

A sloth's arms and legs are great for hanging onto things but can't support the animal's weight. It's hard for a sloth to move along the ground. So, sloths spend most of their time in trees. There, they sleep up to 20 hours a day!

When a sloth is born, it clings to its mother and relies on her for everything. Fathers don't help raise the young. Occasionally, a baby falls from a tree, its mother dies, or people cut trees or change habitats so a baby gets separated from its mother. The baby will not survive without help. That is why people created the Toucan Rescue Ranch in Costa Rica. Workers care for, protect, and teach baby sloths the skills they need to survive in the wild.

ENGAGE

Poll the class to see if any students have ever seen a sloth in real life. If so, invite volunteers to describe what the sloth looked like. If not, provide photos for students to see. Invite students to describe the animals and share what they know about sloths.

EXPLORE

Display pages 2-3 of the projectable magazine. Read aloud the headline and text. Brainstorm ideas about why sloths might need to be saved. Then read the article aloud or have students read it in groups, with a partner, or on their own.

EXPLAIN

After reading, remind students that sloths are wild animals that live in the rainforest. Ask: **How are the sloths in the article different?** (*They are orphans who lost their mothers, and they live in a home where people take care of them.*) Have students turn and talk to identify everything people do for the baby sloths. (*provide shelter, keep them clean, feed them, teach them to climb*) As a class, discuss how this helps prepare the baby sloths to return to the wild. (*They are healthy and have the skills they need to survive.*) Ask: **What would happen to the baby sloths if people didn't help them?** (*They would probably die.*) Ask: **How can Lucy Cooke's photos help?** (*Possible response: If people see the photos, they may donate money to help take care of the sloths.*)

ELABORATE

Remind students that the people in the article who are taking care of orphaned baby sloths are teaching them all of the skills they need to survive. Write a list of things the baby sloths would need to learn. Brainstorm ideas about how people can teach them each skill so they're ready to return to the wild.

EVALUATE

Have students complete the Science Master for this lesson. Encourage them to share and compare their results in small groups or with a partner.

SCIENCE: Saving Sloths

Some baby sloths are orphans.

Write a letter. Thank the people who take care of the sloths.

Use as many of the words in the box as you can.

sloth	mother	orphan	home	care	clean
feed	eat	learn	climb	grow	wild

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated multiple times for writing.

Saving Sloths

Science: page 9

Students should write a thank you letter that contains one or more words from the word bank. They should write complete sentences that begin with a capital letter and end with proper punctuation.