



Animal Charades



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Watch for clues—is that animal wild, tame, domesticated, or feral?

Objectives

Students will (1) define wildlife and (2) distinguish between domesticated and wild animals.

Background

An animal is generally referred to as any living organism other than a plant. Wildlife are animals that live in a natural state, providing for their own food, shelter, and other needs in a suitable habitat. Wildlife also refers to animals that are not tame or domesticated. Wildlife may be microscopic or as large as a whale. Wildlife includes, but is not limited to, insects, spiders, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, and mammals, if not domesticated. Domesticated animals are those that humans have kept in captivity and bred for special purposes. The process of domestication takes place over a long period of time and involves genetic manipulation through selective breeding. All domesticated animals have wild ancestors. Cattle, sheep, dogs, cats, birds, and fish all are examples of domesticated animals.

Confusion can arise about animals that sometimes may be wild, sometimes may be tame, and sometimes may be domesticated. If an animal, or population of animals, can live on its own, survive, and even reproduce, it is probably wild. Individual animals may be tame—like some animals in zoos—while most of their numbers remain wild. A wild animal may appear to be tame but still should be considered wild unless it is both tame and domesticated. Some animals that usually are considered domesticated—such as dogs, cats, horses, and goats—may become wild. The term “feral” refers to when once-domesticated animals become wild. For example, there are feral goats on California’s Catalina Island, and feral horses roam in some areas of the western United States.

When it is difficult to distinguish whether an animal is wild or domesticated, encourage students to think in terms of what is usually the case.

Grade Level:

Lower Elementary,
Upper Elementary

Content Areas:

Science, Expressive Arts,
Environmental Education

Method:

Students use charades to distinguish between wild and domesticated animals.

Materials:

Chalkboard or dry erase board to be used by the recorder; small pieces of writing paper; a container (e.g., box, hat, wastebasket); pens or pencils.

Activity Time:

one 30-minute session

People Power:

30 to 40 students or fewer

Setting:

indoors or outdoors

Conceptual Framework

Topic Reference:

AAIA, WPIA, WPID, HGIIA

Terms to Know:

animal, wild, wildlife,
domesticated, feral

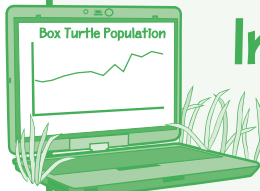
Appendices:

Simulations,
Early Childhood



WILD Work

Farmers do their best to keep all of their domesticated animals alive and healthy. This can become difficult if there are large populations of wolves scouting their sheep. Conversely, a **Wildlife Biologist** focuses on keeping the wolves wild and healthy, which may unintentionally include the death of a farmer's sheep. Both roles are essential in finding the balance between wild and domesticated animals. For more information on these occupations, visit www.projectwild.org.



In Step with STEM

Go outside and observe wildlife. Discuss how animals coexist. Design a food chain or food web model using the animals portrayed in the activity or observed while outdoors. This could be done with a poster, sidewalk chalk, or a dramatization of the interactions.

All domesticated animals have wild ancestors. Cattle, sheep, dogs, cats, birds, and fish are all examples of domesticated animals.

Procedure

- To begin this activity, create a space in the room or outdoors that provides stage and audience areas.
- Define the terms “wild” and “domesticated” as they pertain to animals. Ask students to give examples of each. Record them on the board in a Venn diagram. Are there any that could be both wild and domesticated?
- Explain to students they will pretend to be wild and domesticated animals in a game of charades. Each student should take a small piece of paper and write on it: his or her name, the name of the animal the student is going to portray, and whether the animal is domesticated or wild.
- Collect the slips of paper and put them into a container. Play charades in the order in which the teacher or a student pulls the students' names from the container. When a student's name is called, he or she goes to the designated stage area. A student timekeeper tells the performing student that he or she has ten seconds to dramatize the chosen animal. (As an alternative procedure, students pick a paper out of the container and act out the charade for someone else's animal. The student who wrote the animal's name is identified and cannot guess during that round.) The audience members call out their guesses for the charade.
- Follow the charades with a summary discussion, asking the students to clarify their definitions of wildlife and domesticated animals. What do wild and domestic animals have in common? How are they different? Encourage students to identify the range of forms found in wild and domesticated species.

Extensions

- Lead a hike with students to observe and identify wild and domesticated animals.
- Classify the animals as appropriate or inappropriate pets, with reasons for the classifications.



Assessment

- Define wildlife.
- Explain, using examples, how a species can be considered both wild and domesticated.

