

Summary:

Students write imaginative classified ads about habitats and then play a game to match specific animals with the animal's native habitat or home.

Grade Level: 3-8; K-2

Time:

1-2 class periods (60 minutes)

Subjects:

Science, Language Arts

Skills:

Analysis, research, comparison, description

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the habitat elements used by a specific animal
- Match habitat descriptions with animals
- Describe a specific habitat in a creative way
- Explore the diversity of animals and habitats in the U.S.

Materials:

- Paper and pencils
- Real Estate Ads (from newspaper)
- Encyclopedias, field guides and other reference books on North American wildlife
- Laminated pictures of animals studied in previous activity

Background

Animals and plants are adapted to certain climate conditions. They also depend on one another for survival. Together, climate and other aspects of the non-living (or abiotic) environment and the living (biotic) environment dictate which plants and animals will be able to survive in a certain area.

Plants and animals differ in the kinds of habitats they live in and how they find the habitat elements they need to survive. Studying local wildlife is highly recommended, but this activity may provide an opportunity to delve deeply into one specific ecosystem rather than students randomly choosing an animal species to study.

Preparation

1. If you did Activity 2, you will have pictures to use for this activity. If not, look in magazines for pictures of animals to be used in this activity. Try *Ranger Rick*, *Your Big Backyard*, *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, *International Wildlife*, or other nature magazines.

2. Cut out real estate ads from a local newspaper and copy onto a piece of paper. Make enough copies for all students in class. Also, write out the sample habitat ads included here on the board so students can refer to them during the activity.

Procedure

1. Review the concept of habitat. Habitats are the locations that provide food, water, cover and places to raise young. Ask students to give some examples

of different environments where plants and animals might find habitat, such as meadow, forest, grassland, desert, ocean, river or wetland. Discuss idea of the living and non-living parts of a habitat and how animals rely on both (i.e. a tree for cover and a stream for water).

2. Explain that today students will write advertisements for specific habitats (can use same habitat/animal pair as in previous activity). Tell them they will need to think about both living and non-living attributes of a habitat that an animal may use.

3. Have students read aloud samples of real estate classified ads from a newspaper. Tell students that they will write some of their own ads today – ads in which they will describe an animal's habitat or home. Afterwards, students will play a game to match the ads with the correct animals. Use the following as examples (these should also be written on board, or can be duplicated for older students to read themselves):

Home on the Range: Prime Nebraska prairie! Loaded with tasty grasses, this wide-open property boasts refreshing water potholes. Perfect for growing herds that love to roam. Hot in summer, cold in winter. (Answer: Bison)

Underground Castle: Easy-to-dig soil in Smith family's backyard ripe for an ambitious homebuilder. Tunnel away! Home to juicy earthworms, grubs and other tasty creatures. Leaves for bedding



ACTIVITY

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there for the taking! No pesky cats or dogs. Available now! (Answer: Mole).

4. If not using same animals as in Activity 2, have students choose animals for this activity. The educator may write names of North American animals on slips of paper (one for each student) and have students choose one. Try to include animals all from one ecosystem, such as those found along Florida's Kissimmee River and in the Everglades. Suggestions include: black bears; deer; ibis; egrets; herons; wood storks; snakes; turtles; ducks; alligators; red wolf; fish; river otters; mosquito; raccoons; dragonfly; frog; beetle; spider; snail; crab; snail kite (a bird); and the Florida panther.

5. If necessary, use reference books (Walker's Encyclopedia of Mammals and field guides are both helpful) to gather information for a short classified ad. Have students write the ads and help them when necessary.

6. Collect ads. Pass out copies of a list of all the animals included in activity with a letter (a,b,c, etc.) assigned to each animal. Read the list aloud, showing pictures of the animals while reading the name. Have student volunteers take turns reading the ads, giving each a number (not identifying the author nor the animal at which the ad was aimed). Have students read the ads a second time, this time asking the other students to choose an animal that matches each ad. Have students write down the ad

number next to the letter of the animal or animals to which they think the ad applies. (Some ads might fit more than one animal).

7. Go through ads, asking students which animal they think matches and having the child who wrote it tell the correct answer. Discuss the ones that students missed.

Modifications for Younger Students

You can create the ads, read them to the students, and have them guess. Create a colorful bulletin board display and place animals in their correct habitat.

Extensions

- ✓ Ask students to list any additional questions about animal habitats. Challenge each student to find an answer to at least one question for the next class meeting.
- ✓ Repeat the activity, but focus on plants and their habitat needs.
- ✓ The habitats of individual animals and plants overlap with many other habitats. In small groups, create a brochure for an ecosystem such as a forest, desert, grassland, lake or ocean that will appeal to a number of the plants and animals. Describe the average amount of rainfall, sunlight and temperatures. What kinds of food, water, cover and spaces are available? What does the ecosystem look

like? In the process, discuss how animals share habitats. Does meeting their basic needs put them in conflict such as in a predator and prey relationship? What is their relationship – are they competitors, cooperators or do they ignore each other (a neutral relationship)? Could they divide their resources to avoid competing?

Assessment

- ✓ Ask students to develop a plan for a butterfly garden habitat or an earthworm soil habitat that they could build at the school. What living and non-living things would need to be included to meet the needs of butterflies or earthworms? This is a good lead-in to the School yard Habitats project.
- ✓ If students do the first two activities (*What's Your Habitat* and *Habitat Facts, Habitat Maps*) and focus on the same local species, this activity can serve as an assessment to the earlier activities. Assess each classified ad to determine if it does accurately describe the habitat requirements for the species each student chose.

