



MINNESOTA ZOO™
Changing how you see the world

Adaptations of Imaginary Animals Grades 1-3 Pre-visit Activity

MN Graduation Standards supported:
Grade K Strand 1.B
The student will raise questions about the natural world.

Grade 1 Strand 1.B
The student will raise questions about the natural world, make careful observations and seek answers.

Grade 2 Strand IV.C
The student will understand that organisms live in different environments.

Vocabulary:

Adaptation: A characteristic of a living thing that makes it better suited to survive in a particular environment.

Physical Adaptation: A physical characteristic that helps the animal better suited to survive in a particular environment. An example would be the blubber in a whale which keeps it warm and stores energy.

Introduction:

There are many different animal adaptations found in nature. Through this activity, students compare the different adaptations of animals and how these specific adaptations help the animals survive in the wild.

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Analyze how physical and behavioral adaptations help organisms survive.
2. Define physical and behavioral adaptations.
3. Relate the adaptations of animals to that of humans.
4. Relate the adaptations of the animals to their habitat.

Procedure:

1. Explain that a giraffe's long neck is an adaptation; a trait that helps it fit in and survive in its environment.
2. Tell students that sometimes different species within the same family have very different adaptations that depend on location. For example, the Amur tiger has striped fur while the snow leopard sports a white and black coat. These adaptations allow each species of cat to meet the challenges of its different environment. The Amur tiger's striped fur keeps it disguised in the dense forest of the Russian Far East; the snow leopard's white fur helps it hide in its snowy environment
3. Read the story The Tree Little Pigs. Talk about the story and how the behaviors of the different pigs (building different houses) affected their survival.

Vocabulary continued

Behavioral Adaptation:

The way an animal behaves that makes it better suited to survive in a particular environment. For example, some instincts are behavioral adaptations.

Links:

Adaptation Games

<http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/animalneeds/>

http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco_info/topics/climate/adaptations/index.cfm

Animal Adaptations

Quiz

http://www.netrover.com/~3384mary/quiz_science/animals/quiz1.html

Animal Adaptations

Flashcards

http://whyfiles.larc.nasa.gov/text/educators/activities/2001_2002/athome/animal_adapt.html

Scholastic Adaptations

Investigation

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/dirtrep/animal/index.htm>

Procedure Continued:

4. Discuss animals that have adaptations. For example: large ears on rabbits for hearing predators, long eyelashes on camels to protect from desert sand and sun, badger feet for digging, webbed feet on otters for swimming. Have students name other examples.
5. Using what they have learned about adaptations, have students work individually or in small groups to design an imaginary animal. They can use modeling clay, paper and crayons or markers, or other art supplies.
6. Have each group give a name to their animal and tell or write what adaptation they gave their animal. Students may also make predictions about the habitat of the animal.
7. You may also have students share ways that humans artificially adapt to extremes in their environment, just like the three little pigs. For example, coats, sunglasses, air conditioners, heaters, sunscreen, etc.