

# Animal Adaptations!



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

**Objective:** To introduce the concept of adaptations by inventing and drawing imaginary animals suited to their environments.

**Background:** Living creatures are equipped to survive in their particular environments and habitats. Seals have flippers to swim, fish have gills to help them survive in water, a mole's poor eyesight and good sense of smell help it survive underground, etc. Adaptations usually help an animal obtain food and water, escape from predators, defend itself, move, breathe, stay warm, etc.

## **Materials:**

- Index cards- Write the name of one of the following animals on each card: elephant, lobster, frog, bird (for older students, you could be more specific such as, hummingbird, hawk, etc.)
- Animal adaptation sheet for each student
- Crayons/markers

## **Helpful vocabulary:**

- **Adaptation:** a part of an animal's body or something an animal does that helps it survive in its environment.
- **Survive:** to stay alive

## **Procedure:**

- Ask "Who could survive in the desert longer, you or a camel? Why?" or "Who could live underwater longer, you or a shark? Why?"
- As students begin discussion in small groups or whole class, ask students for other examples that lead to the concept that animals have special features that help them survive in their environment. These special features are called adaptations.

### **ODE Common Core Model Tie-Ins**

#### **Grade 3 Life Science**

*Topic:* Behavior, Growth & Changes

*Concepts:* Plants and animals have physical features that are associated with the environments where they live.

Plants and animals have life cycles that are part of their adaptations for survival in their natural environments.

- Give a student one of the animal cards. Ask them to act out the animal for the class, without making any noise associated with that animal. The rest of group tries to guess what animal is being acted out. Discuss how they knew what the animal was and what adaptations the animal has.
- Brainstorm a list of functions that adaptations can serve and record on the board or large paper so everyone can see. Give hints as needed. End list should include: obtaining food and water, self-defense, ability to move, breathing, staying warm, etc.
- Pass out Animal Adaptation sheet to each student, along with markers/crayons. Students could work individually or in a small group to invent an animal with adaptations (see Animal Adaptation worksheet)

**Follow up/Extension:**

Allow students an opportunity to share their creations with each other.

Extension activities could include writing a story about a day in the life of their invented animal. Also could discuss plant adaptations (thorns, seeds, colorful flowers, deep tap roots, flexibility to withstand winds, etc.) Invent a new plant with adaptations.

**INTEGRATE  
WITH AN ART  
PROJECT!**

This activity could be integrated with various art concepts used to create their animals. They could create them in 3D using various materials, or 2D using line drawings, chalk, pastels, watercolors, etc.

# Animal Adaptations!

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to help you create your own animal.

1. Where does your animal live? Circle one or write your own idea.

forest      in fresh water      in salt water      in the treetops  
under rocks      underground      desert

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How does your animal move most of the time? Circle one or write your own idea.

walk      hop      swim      fly      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What does your animal eat (plants, animals, dead stuff, etc.)?  
How does it get its food? What adaptation does it have to help it get food?

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4. What might eat your animal? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How does your animal defend itself from predators? What adaptations does it have to help it defend itself?

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6. What is your animal called? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Now draw a picture of your invented animal. After you draw it, label at least **three (3) adaptations** you gave your animal to help it survive.

