

# Habitat Exploration In Your Classroom

## Pre- and Post-Visit Activities

A habitat is defined as the environment in which an animal is normally found. Habitats consist of four basic components that every animal needs to survive: food, water, shelter, and space to live and raise young.

### Teacher Objectives:

Students will understand...

1. The components of a habitat (food, water, shelter, and space for living and raising young) and how each component helps animals survive.
2. The interaction and interdependence of nonliving and living components within a habitat.
3. That humans share the same basic needs as all other living things.

### Pre-Visit Activities:

#### Let's Go Camping! (Grades K-2)

Have students make a list of all of the things they would pack if they were going on a long camping trip. Then go through the list and discuss the differences between something they would **need** to survive, and things they would just **want** to bring.

**Standards: Science 3.1**

#### Just like us! (Grades K-3)

- Make a chart...

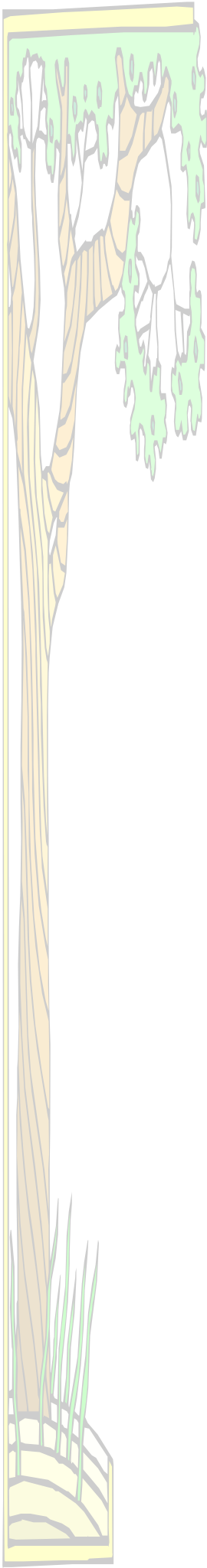
|                | Human | Animal | Plant |
|----------------|-------|--------|-------|
| <b>Food</b>    |       |        |       |
| <b>Water</b>   |       |        |       |
| <b>Shelter</b> |       |        |       |
| <b>Space</b>   |       |        |       |

- Have students brainstorm where each of these living things gets what they need to survive. Your chart may look something like this...

|                | Human                | Animal                      | Plant               |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Food</b>    | Grocery store/garden | Plants, animals in the wild | Sun, photosynthesis |
| <b>Water</b>   | Faucet               | Rain, ponds, plants         | Soil, wetlands      |
| <b>Shelter</b> | House, apartment     | Trees, bushes, rocks, caves | Other plants, rocks |
| <b>Space</b>   | House/yard           | Field, lake, mountainside   | Field, yard         |

- Once they come up with a good list, have them determine some places where a habitat may be shared by humans, animals, and plants. (i.e. backyards, school yards, parks, or zoos.)

**Extension:** Have students brainstorm how the Denver Zoo provides all four



habitat components for some of the animals that they may see here. When you get back from your field trip, see if their hypotheses came true.

**Standards: Science 1, 3.1, 3.3, and 4.3, Reading and Writing 4**

### **Post-Visit Activities:**

#### **Habitat in a Box** (Grades 1-5)

- Have students choose their favorite animals that they visited at the Denver Zoo and have them create a new exhibit.
- It can be the same as their exhibit here or have some improvements that they may suggest.
- Make sure they include all of the components of a habitat: food, water, shelter, and space for living and raising young.

**Extension:** For older students, have them use their math skills in building a model to scale. Make sure they can explain their measurements with background research as to the size of a normal exhibit for that animal or what their home range would be in the wild.

**Standards: Science 3.1, Math 4**

#### **Wanted! – An Undisturbed Habitat** (adapted from National Wildlife Federations, “Habitat for Sale” activity) (Grades 2-8)

- Have students choose a picture of an animal in its habitat out of a magazine. Good magazines to look in are *Your Big Backyard*, *Ranger Rick*, *National Geographic*, or *National Wildlife*. You may also want to cut out some want ads from your local paper for students to model their ads after.
- After they’ve chosen their animal, have them write a descriptive want ad about their specific animals habitat needs.

**Example:** *Wanted! Prime Prairie Habitat* – Prime Colorado prairie with plenty of grass for large rodent families. Soil needs to be easy to dig, because I am an ambitious homebuilder who needs lots of tunnels to raise my young and escape from predators. I don’t need lots of water because I get it from rain and the plants that I eat. Please call 303-123-PDOG if you have anything available.

(answer: prairie dog)

- Make sure that the ads include all four components an animal would need in their habitat.
- Have the students put all of their ads together and try to match the picture with the description.
- You can have students write ads for animals from their region (ex. Colorado – prairie dog, burrowing owl, coyote, etc.), or relate it to another region you may be studying (ex. Africa – lion, black rhino, giraffe, etc.).

**Extensions:** For younger students, you may want to create the ads yourself and have them match the ads you wrote to the photos.

**Standards: Reading and Writing 1, Science 3.1**