

Animal Needs: Who's New at the Zoo?

by Emily Sohn and Barbara J. Foster

Science Objective

In this book, children learn about types of animals, their structures, and their basic needs. As they study where animals live and what they eat, children develop a greater awareness of the great diversity of animal life and the need to treat animals and the environment with care and respect.

iScience Puzzle: Which Animal Lives Here?

In this activity, children consider an environment in an exhibit at a zoo and then work backward to determine what animal is best suited to it. Along the way, they discover that animals need space and food, and must be adapted to the environment in which they live.

Objectives ► Children will:

- define what an animal is.
- understand that animals have structures and basic needs.
- name animals that belong to the six basic groups of animals.
- understand how animals are adapted to their environments.
- develop an appreciation for the diversity of animals and the environment.

Materials

- paper
- pencil

Lesson Plan

Before Reading

Investigation

Ask children to name some animals. Ask: *Are birds, worms, and insects animals?* They will probably say no. Without giving the correct answer, tell them that they are going to explore this question as they read this book.

Science Concepts

An animal is any living creature other than plants that has independent movement, sense organs, a structure, and behaviors.

Ask children to share information about their pets. Ask: *Do you have a pet? If so, how do you take care of it? What does your pet need to be happy and healthy?* Refer to this discussion as children read this book.

Accessing prior knowledge gets children thinking about the topic.

Explain that children will read about many kinds of animals in this book, including birds, frogs, and fish. They will learn that even though animals may be very different, they all have similar needs.

During Reading

Investigation

pp. 6–7: Invite children to answer these questions about the animals pictured. Write their responses on the board, and ask children to change any answers as needed as they continue reading this book.

Science Concepts

Animals have basic needs: air, food, water, and space to live.

pp. 10–11: Write the six groups on the board. Under each group, write the animals that children named in the Before Reading activity. Invite children to add others, stopping when you feel that children have a good understanding of the six groups. Then discuss the structures of each group. Have children identify the eyes, mouth, and other features of these animals.

Animals have unique structures that allow them to move and breathe; most have sense organs to see, hear, and touch.

pp. 12–13: Discuss how animals are suited to their environments. Ask: *How is the polar bear able to swim in such cold water? What kinds of food do deer most likely eat in the woods?*

Animals have structures that are adapted to particular environments.

p. 14: Explain that movement is part of the definition of an animal.

To be classified as an animal, a creature must have the ability to move independently.

p. 16: Discuss why it is important to protect the environment.

By protecting the environment, we help protect the health of wild animals and other living things, including ourselves.

During Reading (continued)

Investigation

p. 18: You may want to relate this to the need for all living things, including people, to stay healthy.

p. 21: Have children work in small groups to determine which animals would make good pets for a classroom. Tell them to consider the animal's need for space and food. Have the groups report their choices to the class.

Science Concepts

All animals require that their basic needs are met in order for them to stay healthy.

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After Reading

Restate the key ideas in the book. Animals have unique structures but all have the same basic needs: food, water, air, and space.

Animals are adapted to their environments; to protect animals, we need to protect their environments.

Investigation

Ask children to name the animals that they might see in their schoolyard. If possible, take them on a walk to try to find the animals they named.

Bring in magazines with pictures of animals and have children make scrapbooks of animals from all six groups.

Understanding Science

Making observations is fundamental to the study of science.

Animals have unique structures that allow them to move and breathe; most have sense organs to see, hear, and touch.