

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand that a habitat provides animals with food, water, and shelter; and it provides plants with sunlight and water.
- 2) Describe the different habitats and give examples of how plants and animals obtain the things they need to live from each type of environment.
 - a) **Forest:** Generally, a forest habitat contains many trees and plants, receives a lot of rain, and is warm in the summer and cold in the winter. In the forest, trees grow tall so that they may obtain all of the sunlight they need to make food. Smaller plants, like bushes, need less sunlight, so they grow below the trees. Here, plants and animals can easily obtain water; animals either obtain their water directly by drinking from streams, rivers, and lakes, or they obtain water from the food (plants) they eat. Forests have plenty of food for animals. Some animals eat the plants growing in the forest and others obtain food from animals living in the forest. Plants and animals have ways to live during the cold winters: the shape of a tree helps keep snow from piling up on the branches and some trees lose their leaves during this time; some animals move to warmer areas (birds), while others find a warm shelter in which to sleep. Many forest animals find shelters in trees, between rocks, or in a den.
 - b) **Desert:** The very dry and, sometimes, very warm desert climate makes life difficult for the plants and animals that live there; they must find a way to survive in this harsh environment. Since it does not rain often in the desert, plants must obtain a surplus of water and be able to store it; they do this in many ways: Some plants have roots that spread out near the top of the soil so that they can get rainwater more quickly, while other plants have roots that go deep down into the ground to find water. Many desert plants have thick stems and leaves designed to store a lot of water, and the leaves of desert plants have a waxy covering that prevents water loss. Desert animals don't always have access to bodies of water so they must obtain their water from the food they eat. Since the desert can be very warm, animals must find ways to stay cool.

Animals will seek shade during the hot days and many animals will sleep in a cool place during the day and wake during the cool nights.

- c) **Rainforest:** The climate of the rainforest habitat is very wet and usually warm. These conditions help plants thrive all year long, providing shelter and food for a variety of animals. The animals of the rainforest help the plants by moving seeds that stick to their bodies.
- d) **Ocean:** The Ocean is a large, deep, saltwater habitat. Plants often grow near the top of the ocean where sunlight can penetrate. Plenty of water is available for plants and animals in the ocean habitat and animals feed on plants, plankton, fish, and shellfish. Sometimes, animals of the ocean have to save themselves from other animals. They do this with protective coverings or by swimming in groups. Ocean animals also need to breathe. Some animals, mammals, hold their breath underwater and resurface for air. Others have openings called gills that allow them to breathe underwater.
- e) **Pond:** A pond is a body of freshwater surrounded by land. Animals here live in, on, and around the pond, finding shelter underground and in and under plants. The plants and animals that live in the pond habitat have plenty of water and the animals feed on snails, insects, fish, snakes, and plants.
- f) **Arctic:** The arctic is a cold, windy place that is covered with ice and snow most of the time. Some small plants receive enough sunlight to live in the arctic, but it is too cold for large plants and trees to grow and only few animals can survive. Some animals here live in dens dug into the snow and keep warm with their thick fur. They feed on animals, plants and berries.
- g) Understand that habitats change. A habitat might flood or dry out. Or lightning might start a fire killing plants and some animals. Also, people sometimes change habitats to build homes or businesses.

Suggested Activities

- 1) **Design a Habitat:** Have each student think about the habitats that they have seen on the video and let them draw a habitat of their own. Encourage students to think about what kinds of plants and animals would live in the habitat they have chosen. If it is a cold habitat, what kind of covering will their animals have? How will plants grow in the cold? Encourage students to be creative -- the habitats they think of do not have to be real, and neither do the plants and animals, but they should belong in the designed habitat.
- 2) **Find a habitat:** Go outside and have students explore habitats on your school campus. Look for gardens, shady areas around trees, even patches of grass. Have students carefully observe the kinds of plants and animals that live in these places and discuss the ways in which they meet their needs.

Vocabulary

Burrow — A hole in the ground made by an animal for shelter

Habitat — A place where animals and plants can find everything they need to live and grow

Plankton — A floating, or slowly swimming body of small pieces of algae and tiny animals

Shelter — Something that provides protection

