

“Create a Critter” Animal Adaptations

Pre-Sly Park experience activity

Content Standards:

- NGSS 4-LS1-1 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes
Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction.

Learning Objectives:

The students will be able to:

- Classify and categories animals by physical and behavior traits.
- Construct model animals, and critique and compare results with other students.

Anticipatory Set:

How do the animals that live at Sly Park make a living?

What types or categories of animals will we see?

Can we make an imaginary animal that lives and survives in the forest?

Background Information for Teachers:

All animals (consumers), are living things that receive energy from plants (producers). They have attained adaptations through the processes of natural selection and evolution.

Adaptations are defined as physical characteristics or behavioral traits that help an animal meet its survival needs. These adaptations are used for:

1. Meeting food and water needs (offensive)
2. Protection from predators (defensive)
3. Reproduction
4. Movement around habitat

Animals that have attained suitable adaptations over time will find survival of the species possible. However, changes in the environment will challenge the species to adapt or face declining population.

Vocabulary: Producer Consumer Adaptations

Materials:

Class projector, unlined art paper, pencils, crayons or markers

Time: ½ hour to 45 minutes

Procedures

Introduce the concept of adaptations, and give examples such as a squirrel, a woodpecker, or a Mt. lion. Revisit that these animals are part of categories (families) of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, arachnids or birds to name the most common. The teacher will challenge students to create an animal, guiding students with a class collaboration of a new imaginary animal through the process of coming up with viable adaptations. Allow for wild creativity. Welcome crazy ideas! When the class animal is created and displayed, it's time for independent work.

“Create a Critter” activity: create an imaginary forest dweller. Using at least 4 adaptations, one each for offense, defense, reproduction and movement. Pairing students is recommended for this activity.

Assessment:

Student teams share their creations with classmates, explaining the animal by family, offensive adaptations, defensive adaptations, reproductive strategies, and movement mechanisms. Students may critique and improve upon adaptations as a class. Extension activity would be to create model animals.