



# LESSON PLAN

## ADAPTATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT GRADES 3-5

### SUMMARY

Animals, including humans, have adaptations or characteristics that help them to obtain food, protect themselves, and reproduce to help them survive. Different animals have different types of adaptations that serve different purposes.

### DURATION

One to two 45-minute classroom periods.

### PRE-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Please see Discussion Questions located under the video. These can be discussed as a group or answered individually in student science notebooks.

### MATERIALS

- Science notebooks
- Pencils
- Video of a live animal
- (optional) Access to local live animal—such as classroom pet, vet, farm, etc.
- Research materials (books, Internet)
- Slips of paper
- Jar



### ENGAGE

Choose a local, relevant type of animal to kick off the lesson. This should ideally be something students can see live in the classroom (a classroom pet), or you could arrange a visit to a local farm, vet, etc. If you can't obtain a live example an online video will work as well. Ask students what type of habitat this animal lives in. Have them list (or draw) characteristics of that type of habitat in their science notebooks or on the board.



### EXPLORE

Now ask students to think about the characteristics of the animal that help it survive in its environment.

Facilitate by asking them the following probing questions:

- How does this animal survive in its environment?
- Are any parts of its body particularly useful for living where it does? For building its home? For escaping?
- How does this animal obtain food?
- Are any part of its body particularly useful for it to find, catch, or eat its food?
- How does this animal protect itself?
- Are any parts of its body particularly useful for knowing if danger is coming? To defend itself? To fight back?

Students should observe the animal and think about what they might know about it. They should be able to come up with some good ideas as to how various characteristics help it survive. They should be able to explain what they think in the form of an argument from evidence. For example, a fish can survive underwater because it breathes through its gills.



## EXPLAIN

Explain that the characteristics students have been studying that help an animal survive in its environment are called adaptations. If the class has the opportunity to visit with an expert (farm, vet, zoo, etc.) they can ask questions of the expert to better understand how this particular type of animal is adapted to survive in its habitat, obtain food, and defend itself. If no expert is available the class can conduct research to see if the ideas they came up with in the Explore portion of the activity are correct.

Explain to students that they will now get a chance to see some adaptations of a wide variety of animals.



## WATCH THE *GENERATION GENIUS ADAPTATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT* VIDEO AS A GROUP.

Then facilitate a conversation using the Discussion Questions.



## ELABORATE

Ask students to choose another animal they like. Ask them to research that animal and determine if they think it could survive well in the environment where they (the students) live. Why or why not? For example, could an elephant live in Montana? Could a humpback whale live in your classroom? What adaptations would be useful?



## EVALUATE

Write common animals on slips of paper (can be limited to those that have been discussed in class and from the video—ideally provide photos of the animals). Have students draw an animal from a jar. Ask them to list 1-2 adaptations that help that animal survive in its environment, help it obtain food, and/or defend itself. They should explain what the characteristic of the animal is and why it makes them think it could be used to help the animal survive (provide an argument from evidence).