

Instructional Lesson Plan
Old Dominion University College of Education

Overview

Lesson Plan Overview

1. **Lesson Title:** Living Things and Their Environments
2. **Lesson Author:** Sinai Pena
3. **Grade Level:** 2nd
4. **Subject Areas:** Science and Social Studies
5. **Time Allotted for Lesson:** Approximately 60 minutes
6. **Short Description of Lesson:**

In this lesson, students will explore how living things depend on their environment to meet their basic needs. Students will investigate habitats found in forest, plains, and desert environments and identify how animals adapt to survive in each habitat. Connections will be made between animal habitats and how Indigenous peoples, including the Powhatan, Lakota, and Pueblo, adapted to their environments to meet their needs.

SOL & Instructional Objectives

8. Lesson Plan Standards & Instructional Objectives

Social Studies

SOL 2.5 The student will use history and social science skills to identify the geographic location, use of resources, and contributions of Indigenous peoples past and present, including:

- a) Indigenous nations and tribes of the Eastern Woodlands (Powhatan);
- b) Indigenous nations and tribes of the Plains (Lakota);
- c) Indigenous nations and tribes of the Southwest (Pueblo).

Instructional Objectives: Identify the location, environment, and resources of the Powhatan, Lakota, and Pueblo peoples; describe how geography influenced each group's way of life.

Science

SOL 2.5 The student will investigate and understand that living things are part of a system, including habitats and how living things depend on their environment.

Instructional Objectives: Students will identify the basic components of habitats and explain how animals depend on their environment for food, water, shelter, and space.

Focus

9. Enduring Understandings

Social Studies

All students should: understand that people's lives are influenced by where they live, including the land, climate, and available resources; recognize that Indigenous peoples adapted their lifestyles to meet their needs based on their environment; and appreciate the lasting contributions of the Powhatan, Lakota, and Pueblo to American culture.

Science

Students will understand that living things depend on their environment to survive and that different environments support different plants and animals.

10. Essential Questions

- What do living things need to survive?
- How do habitats help animals and people meet their needs?

Procedures

11. Lesson Set (Preparation Phase)

To begin the lesson, the teacher will display images of animals living in different environments such as forests, plains, and deserts. Students will be asked to observe the images and discuss what they notice about where the animals live. The teacher will guide a discussion using questions such as, “What do these animals need to survive?” and “How does the environment help them meet those needs?” The teacher will explain that students will be learning about habitats and how living things depend on their environment.

12. Rationale

This lesson is designed to help students understand how environments support living things and how animals adapt to survive in different habitats. By making connections between animal habitats and Indigenous peoples’ ways of life, students will deepen their understanding of how humans and animals depend on the environment. This lesson supports scientific thinking while reinforcing social studies concepts related to geography and adaptation.

13. Techniques and Activities (Teaching of the Lesson- Learning Experience)

Habitat Exploration: Teacher Directed

- 1. Introduce the lesson topic and visuals.**
 - Display images of animals living in forest, plains, and desert environments.
 - Ask students to observe the pictures and describe what they notice about each environment.
 - Ask guiding questions such as:
 - “What do you see in this habitat?”
 - “What do you think this animal needs to survive here?”
 - Explain to students that animals live in habitats that help meet their basic needs for food, water, shelter, and space.
 - Play Animal Habitat video
- 2. Review the basic needs of living things.**
 - Review the four basic needs: food, water, shelter, and space.
 - Tell students: “As we look at different habitats today, think about how each environment helps animals meet their needs.”

- Record key vocabulary on the board (habitat, forest, plains, desert, food, water, shelter).

Habitat Sorting Activity: Cooperative Learning

3. Explain the group activity.

- Tell students they will work in small groups to sort animals by habitat.
- Explain that each group will decide which animals belong in a forest, plains, or desert environment.
- Emphasize that students should think about how the environment helps the animal survive.
- Place students into small groups
- Provide each group with animal pictures and habitats
- Give students a simple graphic organizer or sorting mat with the three habitats labeled

4. Guide group work and discussion.

- Walk around the room to monitor collaboration and support understanding.
- Ask guiding questions such as:
 - “Why does this animal belong in this habitat?”
 - “What does this environment provide for the animal?”
 - “Would this animal survive in a different habitat? Why or why not?”

Connecting Science to Social Studies: Guided Discussion

5. Make connections to Indigenous peoples.

- After sorting, bring the class back together.
- Ask students to compare animal habitats to where the Powhatan, Lakota, and Pueblo lived.
- Ask questions such as:
 1. “How is an animal’s habitat similar to where people live?”
 2. “How did Indigenous peoples use their environment to meet their needs, just like animals do?”

Class Discussion / Wrap-Up

6. Share and reflect as a class.

- Invite groups to share one animal and explain why it belongs in a certain habitat.
- Encourage students to make comparisons between habitats.

7. Revisit the essential question.

- Discuss the essential question: “How do environments help living things survive?”
- Reinforce the idea that both animals and people depend on their environment to meet their needs.

14. Lesson Closure (Student Activities to enhance comprehension)

To wrap up the lesson, the class will return to the key ideas discussed about habitats and the basic needs of living things. Students will share one example of how an animal's environment helps it meet its needs for food, water, shelter, or space. The teacher will guide students in making connections between animal habitats and how people, including the Powhatan, Lakota, and Pueblo, depended on their environments to survive. Each student will then complete a short exit ticket by finishing the sentence, "Living things depend on their environment because...". Finally, students will share one idea or fact that stood out to them and explain how it shows the importance of the environment for living things.

15. Assessment/Evaluation

During whole-group instruction and learning activities, students will be evaluated through informal observation and participation. The teacher will monitor students' engagement during class discussions, habitat sorting activities, and cooperative group work. Immediate feedback will be provided as students share ideas, explain their thinking, and collaborate with peers during learning activities.

Group participation:

Students will be monitored to ensure that all members of the group are contributing, listening to one another, and staying on task during cooperative learning activities. The teacher will use student dialogue and questioning to gauge understanding of how habitats provide food, water, shelter, and space for living things.

Class Anchor Chart / Sorting Chart:

The class chart or sorting activity will serve as an assessment of student comprehension. Accurate placement of animals into appropriate habitats and student explanations will demonstrate understanding of how environments support living things.

Group Habitat Activity:

The group habitat activity will be used to evaluate each team's understanding of habitat components, ability to work collaboratively, and connection between animals and their environments. Each group's work should include accurate identification of the habitat, the animal's basic needs, and how the environment supports survival.

| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Completion | Student did not participate in the activity. | Activity was incomplete or missing key parts. | Activity was mostly complete with minor errors. | Activity was complete and accurate. |

| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Science Understanding | Did not identify how habitats support living things. | Identified some habitat features with errors or confusion. | Correctly identified one or two habitat components. | Clearly explained how the habitat supports the animal's needs. |
| Participation / Explanation | Did not contribute to group discussion or explanations. | Limited participation or unclear explanations. | Participated with simple explanations. | Actively participated and clearly explained thinking. |

Exit Ticket:

Each student's written exit ticket will be used to check individual understanding of the lesson's essential question:

"How do environments help living things survive?"

16. Student products

As a result of this lesson, students will contribute to a class chart or sorting display that shows what they learned about habitats and how living things depend on their environment. Working in groups, students will complete a habitat sorting activity and explain how animals use their environment to meet their basic needs for food, water, shelter, and space. To demonstrate individual understanding, each student will complete a short exit ticket explaining how environments help living things survive.

17. Supplemental Activities: Extension and Remediation

Extension

Students will have opportunities to extend their learning by researching additional animals and their habitats. Early finishers or advanced learners may choose an animal and create a drawing, labeled diagram, or short written explanation describing how the animal's habitat helps it survive. Students may also create a simple digital slide or short video explaining how different environments support different living things.

Remediation

Remediation activities will include visual and auditory supports to reinforce understanding of habitats and basic needs. Students who need additional support may review animal picture cards, habitat visuals, and the class chart used during the sorting activity. The teacher may re-model how to identify habitat components and provide guided questioning to help students make connections between animals and their environments.

18. Adaptations for Diverse Special Learners

All Learners

(The accommodations for “All learners” are geared toward students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, etc; however, these accommodations could be beneficial for all students.)

- Students will work in flexible, small groups to encourage peer support and collaboration during habitat sorting and discussion activities.
- Students may choose their work environment (desk, carpet area, or group table) to support focus and engagement.
- Students may use assistive technology such as text-to-speech tools or audio supports for listening and comprehension.
- Tactile and visual learning methods will be used, including animal picture cards, habitat visuals, charts, and diagrams.
- Tasks and directions may be read aloud, modeled, or broken into smaller, manageable steps.
- Sentence stems and visual word banks (e.g., habitat, food, water, shelter, space) will be provided to support oral and written responses.

ESL Learners

- Students may be paired with a supportive native English-speaking buddy during group activities.
- Vocabulary cards with images and definitions will be provided in English and, when possible, in the student’s home language.
- Hands-on and visual learning experiences will allow students to demonstrate understanding through discussion, pointing, and sorting rather than only written responses.
- Key concepts (habitat, environment, food, water, shelter, animals) will be reinforced through repeated visuals and modeling.

Gifted Learners

- Students may extend their learning by researching an animal and its habitat and creating a short “Habitat Profile” or labeled diagram.
- Students may take on leadership roles during group work or assist in guiding class discussions.
- Students may create a short digital presentation or video explaining how different environments support different living things.

19. Differentiated Instruction

This lesson is designed to meet the diverse learning needs of all students through integrated instruction that connects science with discussion, visuals, and hands-on learning. Students will work in flexible cooperative groups during habitat sorting and discussion activities, allowing auditory learners to engage through conversation, visual learners through pictures and charts, and kinesthetic learners through hands-on manipulation of materials. The lesson encourages multimodal learning rather than traditional instructional methods, giving students multiple ways to demonstrate understanding, including speaking, sorting, drawing, and explaining their thinking. The classroom environment supports student choice by allowing flexible seating options that help promote focus and comfort. Student evaluation will consider both individual understanding and each learner’s participation and contribution during collaborative activities.

Resources

20. Materials and Additional Resources

Instructional Video:

- **Title:** *Habitats for Kids*
- **Source:** <https://youtu.be/40B2IjLWfTQ?si=eMvTpyIYV5LMmePm>
- **Summary:** This age-appropriate educational video introduces students to different animal habitats such as forests, plains, and deserts and explains how environments provide food, water, shelter, and space for living things. The video uses clear visuals, simple explanations, and real-life examples that support second-grade comprehension and reinforce how living things depend on their environment.

Supplemental Materials:

- Animal habitat picture cards (forest, plains, desert)
- Habitat sorting mats or graphic organizers
- Printed or digital images of animals and environments
- Chart paper, markers, crayons, and sorting templates

- Classroom tablets
- Smart/Promethean Board for displaying videos, visuals, charts, and guiding questions





Scorpion



Porcupine



Black Bear



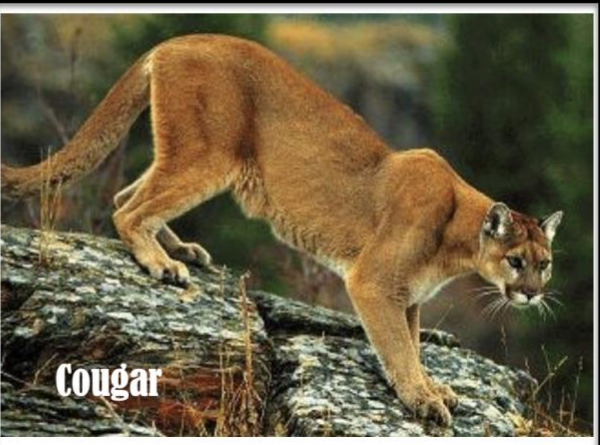
Grizzly Bear



Chipmunk



Cougar





Buffalo







Prairie Dog

SORTING BY HABITAT

Look at each card and decide if the animal lives in the forest, grasslands, or desert. Then, glue the picture into the correct column.

| forest | grasslands | desert |
|--------|------------|--------|
| | | |

