

## What's That, Habitat?

### State Mandated Benchmarks and Standards

*Grade Level:* K-4

*Subject Areas:* Science, Language Arts, Environmental Education, Expressive Arts

*Key Terms:* habitat, survival needs, food, water, shelter, space, arrangement

#### **Objectives**

Students will (1) identify their own basic needs for food, water, shelter, and space in a suitable arrangement; and (2) generalize that wildlife and other animals have similar basic needs.

#### **Method**

Students draw pictures of human and animal homes, comparing basic needs.

#### **Materials**

Paper and crayons or chalk

#### **Background**

Humans and other animals – including pets, farm animals, and wildlife – have some of the same basic needs. Every animal needs a home. However, a home is not just a house where people live. Home, for many animals includes the out-of-doors. The scientific term for an animal's home is habitat. An animal's habitat includes food, water, shelter or cover, and space. Because animals need the food, water, shelter, and space to be available in a way that meets its needs, these things must be available in a suitable arrangement.

A house may be considered shelter for people. People build houses, apartments, trailers, houseboats, and other kinds of shelters in which to live. An animal's shelter might be underground, in a bush, in the bark of a tree, or in some rocks. Animals need a place to find food and water. They also need enough space in which to live and to find the food, water, and shelter they need. Home for an animal is more like a neighborhood that has everything in it that is needed for survival.

#### **Procedure**

1. Write the following words on a chalkboard: food, water, shelter, and space.

2. Read each word aloud, asking the students to repeat the words.

3. Food and water will be easy concepts for the students to understand. Shelter and space will be more difficult. Ask the students to explain the definitions of shelter and space.

4. Give the students paper, chalk, pencils, or crayons. Ask the students to draw a picture of where they live, including pictures of where they find food, water, shelter, and space. Ask the students to label the parts of their drawings where they find food, water, shelter, and space.

NOTE: Shelter could be shown in a number of ways, maybe by labeling the roof. Space can be shown as the area outside and inside the house or the neighborhood (space actually includes all the areas used for survival).

5. Once the drawings are complete, write two more words on the chalkboard: arrangement and habitat. Say the words aloud, asking the students to repeat them.

6. Inform the students that food, water, shelter, and space arranged to meet an animal's needs is called "habitat". Ask the children if they could live in a home where the bathroom was four miles in one direction, the kitchen was twelve miles in another, and the bedroom was nine miles in yet another direction. This arrangement is not suitable for a person, although some animals do travel great distances in their habitat.

7. Ask the students to write the word "habitat" in big letters at the top of their drawings. Discuss the meaning of habitat.

8. Give the students another piece of paper. Ask them to think of an animal. Ask a few students what animal they are thinking of and identify where the animals are wild or domesticated. If both wild and domesticated animals are not part of the grouping, ask the students to think of the kinds of animals that are missing. It is important to make sure the

students are thinking about both wild and domesticated animals.

9. Ask the students to draw a picture of their animal in a place where it lives. Ask the students to make sure they include food, water, shelter, and space in an arrangement that they think would make it possible for the animal to survive.

10. Ask the students to talk about their drawings, pointing out the habitat components they have included.

11. Ask the students to write “habitat” in big letters on the top of this drawing as well. Discuss with the students how humans and other animals need food, water, shelter, and space. The arrangement is different for each, but all have similar basic needs. When the students have an understanding of habitat, write a few sentences on the chalkboard defining habitat. As much as possible, make use of the ideas the students suggest.

12. Suggested sentences for older students: Food, water, and shelter must be within a useable range for each animal. Different kinds of animals need different kinds of food, water, and shelter, and different amounts of space.

12. Ask the students to write these sentences on the back of one of their drawings. They may also read the words in the sentences on the board and write their own sentences about what habitat is, drawing pictures to go along with their words.

### **Evaluation**

1. Choose the elements that wildlife species need to survive: food, water, shelter, space, and arrangement. Explain.

2. Choose the elements people need to survive: food, water, shelter, space, and arrangement. Explain. Write a sentence about what people and wildlife need to survive.



Adapted from: Project Wild. Houston: Council for Environmental Education. 2005  
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