

Survival

Post-Program Activity

Grades 6-8



Objective: Students will describe various adaptations that could help an animal survive in a particular habitat.

Sunshine State Standards:

- **SC.6.L.15.1** Analyze and describe how and why organisms are classified according to shared characteristics with emphasis on the Linnaean system combined with the concept of Domains.
- **SC.7.L.17.2** Compare and contrast the relationships among organisms such as mutualism, predation, parasitism, competition, and commensalism.
- **SC.8.N.4.1** Explain that science is one of the processes that can be used to inform decision making at the community, state, national, and international levels.

Overview:

Students describe an imaginary planet and then invent animals with adaptations that would allow them to survive there.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Crayons or markers

Procedure:

- Review the different types of adaptations animals can have (physical, behavioral) and how these adaptations help animals survive (find food, avoid predators, locate a mate, etc.).
- Tell students they are going to be imagining that they have discovered a new planet that is capable of supporting life. As a class, decide on a name for the planet and develop a list of its characteristics (climate, landforms, etc.).
- Have each student draw and describe a plant to live on the new planet. Display these in the front of the room.
- Put the students into pairs and have each pair invent an herbivore that eats one or more of these plants. Have them decide where it lives, what it eats and how it reproduces (oviparous or viviparous). Then have them draw their animal and list at least 2 physical adaptations and 2 behavioral adaptations that help it survive. Display these herbivores in the front of the room with the plants.
- Put the students into small groups and have each group invent either an omnivore or a carnivore that eats one or more of the organisms displayed. Students should describe this animal's characteristics, draw a picture of it, and list at least 2 physical adaptations and 2 behavioral adaptations that help it survive. Display these animals with the others.
- Ask the class which animals they think would be most likely to survive on this new planet and have them explain their reasoning. Discuss what kinds of new adaptations they might expect these animals to develop over time.

Extensions:

- After inventing the omnivores/carnivores, allow students to modify their herbivores by adding one new adaptation. Discuss how this is similar to what happens in real life as animals evolve over time.
- Introduce a "disaster" that destroys part of the planet and discuss how this would affect the animals.