

Survival

Pre-Program Activity

Grades 3-5



Objective: Students will describe one adaptation of an animal and explain how it helps that animal survive.

Sunshine State Standards:

- **SC.3.N.3.1** Recognize that words in science can have different or more specific meanings than their use in everyday language; for example, energy, cell, heat/cold, and evidence.
- **LA.3.4.1.1** The student will write narratives based on real or imagined events or observations that include characters, setting, plot, sensory details, and a logical sequence of events.
- **SC.4.L.16.3** Recognize that animal behaviors may be shaped by heredity and learning.
- **LA.4.4.1.1** The student will write narratives based on real or imagined ideas, events, or observations that include characters, setting, plot, sensory details, a logical sequence of events, and a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
- **SC.5.L.17.1** Compare and contrast adaptations displayed by animals and plants that enable them to survive in different environments such as life cycles variations, animal behaviors and physical characteristics.
- **LA.5.4.1.2** The student will write a variety of expressive forms (e.g., fiction, short story, autobiography, science fiction, haiku) that employ figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, hyperbole), rhythm, dialogue, characterization, plot, and/or appropriate format.

Overview:

Students write a pourquoi story that provides a fictional explanation for an animal adaptation.

Materials:

- *How the Ostrich Got Its Long Neck* by Verna Aardema (or another animal-themed pourquoi story)
- Pictures of various animals
- Paper and pencils

Procedure:

- Read aloud the story *How the Ostrich Got Its Long Neck* by Verna Aardema
- Ask students if they think that is the real reason that an ostrich has a long neck. Explain that this is a pourquoi story (a story that explains why something exists) and that throughout time people have used stories like this to explain how different things in nature came to be.
- Tell the students that they will be creating their own pourquoi story about an animal (this can be done individually or in small groups). Make sure students understand the elements of the story (problem/solution, protagonist/antagonist, etc.)
- To help students come up with an idea, show them pictures of different types of animals and have them point out the features of each one (for example, a bullfrog has big eyes, a big mouth, slimy skin with a brown pattern and moves by hopping or swimming).
- After students have written their story, have them illustrate it and turn it into a book. Then give them a chance to read their story to the rest of the class.
- Ask students why they think the animals in their stories really have the special features they wrote about. Explain that each of these features is an adaptation that helps the animal to survive.
- Have students add an "Author's Note" to the end of their book that explains why the animal really needs the adaptation they wrote about.