

Where the Locals Hang Out

Pre-Program Activity

Grades 3-5



Objective: Students will describe an animal that lives in Florida and compare it to a similar species that lives in a different part of the world.

Sunshine State Standards:

- **SC.3.L.17.1** Describe how animals and plants respond to changing seasons.
- **LA.3.4.2.4** The student will write a variety of communications (e.g., friendly letters, thank-you notes, formal letters, messages, invitations).
- **SC.4.L.17.1** Compare the seasonal changes in Florida plants and animals to those in other regions of the country.
- **LA.4.4.2.4** The student will write a variety of communications (e.g., friendly letters, thank-you notes, formal letters, messages, invitations) that have a clearly stated purpose and that include the date, proper salutation, body, closing and signature.
- **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.5.4.2.4** The student will write a variety of communications (e.g., friendly letters, thank-you notes, formal letters, messages, invitations) that have a clearly stated purpose and that include the date, proper salutation, body, closing and signature.

Overview: Students pretend to be an animal living in Florida and write to a “pen pal” in another part of the world.

Materials:

- Field guides and other nonfiction books about Florida animals
- Paper and pencils
- [List of Florida animals and pen pals](#)

Procedure:

- Ask students to name some animals that live in Florida and list their responses.
- Ask students if any of the animals on their list live in any other parts of the world. Then ask if they think those animals look and behave in the same way as those living in Florida.
- Point out that some of the animals listed might include more than one species (for example, “alligators” would include American Alligators as well as Chinese Alligators). Ask the students if they can be more specific about any of the animals on their list.
- Assign each student an animal that lives in Florida. Explain that they are going to be writing a letter from that animal to a similar species that lives in another part of the world. The letter should include a description of the animal’s appearance, its habitat and the types of things it does each day (what it eats, which predators it has to watch out for, etc.).
- Display the letters on a bulletin board with pictures of the different species, or, if possible, give the letters to another class and allow them to respond to their pen pal.

Extension:

- Have students make a Venn diagram that compares their Florida animal to the species they wrote to.