

## **Lesson Plan: Teeming with Life - Amazing Forest Creatures**

### **Activity: Habitat Classifieds**

Students write "classified" ads describing several forest habitats, and they identify potential residents of the habitats.

#### ***Academic Areas:***

Language arts, Science

#### ***Grade Levels:***

Grades 4–6

#### ***Learning Objectives:***

After participating in the activity that follows, students will be able to do the following:

- List several different forest habitats.
- Name species that live in the different habitats.
- Understand the importance of protecting forest habitats.

#### ***Standards Met:***

##### **Language Arts**

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes

##### **Science**

- Understands structure and function in living systems
- Learns about diversity and adaptations of organisms

#### ***Materials for the class:***

*Blades*, paper, pens



***Background:***

Forests are incredibly diverse habitats. Forest habitats support communities of life that are adapted especially for their conditions. Following is a brief description of five forest habitats and the plants and animals they support. Your students can use these summaries as a basis for writing their classified ads.

***Tropical Moist Rainforest.*** Tropical moist rainforests are the most diverse land based habitat on earth. The constant moisture and warm temperature created a tangled maze of trees and vines. Animals of all shapes and sizes thrive in this habitat, including snakes, frogs, orangutans, leopards, parrots and a wide variety of colorful birds.

***Tropical Dry Rainforest.*** Tropical dry rainforests differ from tropical moist rainforests in that they have an extended dry season which can last up to 8 months. They receive all of their rainfall in a few short months. The plants and animals have had to adapt to a cycle of drought and deluge. Many rare animals such as fossas, lemurs, Malagasy giant rats and Komodo dragons can be found along with tmonkeys, parrots and leopards. The unusual weather pattern supports rare and usual birds like the chachalaca as well.

***Temperate Coniferous Forest.*** The coniferous forest is made up of trees that hold their seeds in cones. Most coniferous forests fall in temperate zones with clearly defined winters. Many of the animals are seasonal residents, like hawks, owls, moose and wolves. Some animals, such as bears, stay all year and hibernate during the cold winter months.

***Temperate Deciduous Forest.*** Deciduous forests are made of hardwood trees that lose their leaves during the fall. With a more moderate winter, the forest floor can support a wide range of plants, which in turn attracts many different kinds of animals. You will find deer, foxes, bear, and beavers in these forests. You will also find many animals living in the trees themselves, such as koala bears, raccoons, and squirrels.

***Boreal Forest.*** The boreal forest is the largest land biome on earth. It is found in the northernmost part of earth. While it can warm up to 70 degrees in the summer, boreal forests are known for their extreme cold. Nearly all of the residents of the

boreal forest migrate during the winter months. Moose, bear and millions of birds migrate each year to these forests. A few animals such as the marmot and raven will stay for the winter, but they are few and far between. In the southern most portion of the boreal forest, you will find animals adapted to the snow such as the snowshoe hare and the lynx.

***What to Do:***

1. Ask your class how people go about finding a place to live. One way is to read classified ads in a newspaper that describe features of different homes. Forest animals don't read ads, but they do look for homes that are right for them-homes called habitats. Ask students if they can name several types of habitats (rainforest, desert, prairie, etc.). Now, can they name any forest habitats? Explain that forest habitats provide all the elements needed for a community of forest plants and animals to survive.
2. Explain that the students work for Forest Weekly a newspaper that publishes classified ads for forest dwellers. Students are to write classified ads tailored for plants and animals living in different forest habitats. Use the habitats described in the background to get started, but encourage the class to come up with others. Divide the class into teams of four or five, and assign each team a different habitat. Team member must use research materials to learn about their habitats and the plants and animals that live in them. Then each student should write a classified ad describing the habitat as an ideal place for a different plant or animal that would call it home. For example, an ad directed at a koala bear might read: "Perfect place to kick back and relax! We offer an incredible selection of tree hotels. Your room also comes with a stocked refrigerator, so you'll find plenty to fill your tummy!"
3. After everyone has written the ads, compile them into a classified page. Divide the page into a section for each habitat, and list the appropriate ads under each. Students should try to match the ads with the creatures or plants they describe.
4. Expand the idea of habitats to explore grassland sanctuaries and reserves-areas that are protected because of their unique habitat, inhabitants, or other special qualities.

**Resources**

Taiga Biomes. (2013, January 31). Blue Planet Biomes. Retrieved January 31, 2013,

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Deciduous Forest (biology) -- Britannica Online Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Britannica Online Encyclopedia. Retrieved January 27, 2013, from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/155095/deciduous-forest>

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The Tropical Rain Forest. The Global Change Program at the University of Michigan. Retrieved January 31, 2013, from <http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange1/current/lectures/kling/rainforest/rainforest.html>