

LESSON 19: ECOSYSTEMS

SUPPLIES

MAIN BIN

- Paper boxes (20)
- Construction paper (60)
- Pipe cleaners (100)
- Cotton Balls (100)
- Mini Animals (20)
- Masking Tape (3 rolls)

PENCIL BOX

- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks

FOLDER

- Ecosystem templates (20)

INTRODUCTION



2-5 min

Ecosystems are made up of living and non-living things that all work together. Color plays a role in animal survival—green frogs blend into leaves, while white polar bears blend into snow. This is called camouflage and helps animals stay safe in their habitats.

An ecosystem is a place where animals and plants live together. There are many different kinds of habitats—hot deserts, cold snowy places, deep oceans, and green forests.



OBJECTIVES



Students will learn that animals need food, water, and shelter to survive.



Students will build a mini habitat to show where an animal lives.

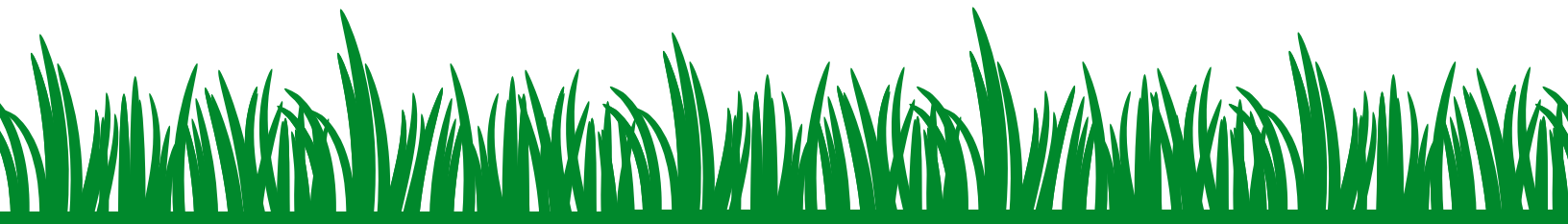
HOOK



3-5 min


Ask students:

- Have you ever seen where animals live—in a forest, ocean, or even your backyard?
- What do animals need to stay alive?
- Do all animals live in the same kind of place?






DISCUSSION

 3-5 min

Imagine walking through a forest, hearing birds chirp, feeling the breeze, and spotting bugs, plants, and maybe even a squirrel or two. All of these living things—and even the air, water, and sunlight—are part of something called an ecosystem. An ecosystem is a place where plants, animals, and the environment work together to live and grow. Every piece has a job, and they all depend on each other to survive.

EXPERIMENT

 20-25 min

1. Give each student one paper box. This will be the base of their animal habitat.
2. Ask each student to choose a habitat to build—forest, ocean, desert, or arctic. Name animals that live in each one to help them decide.
3. Have students use markers or crayons to color the inside and outside of their box to match the habitat they chose (e.g., blue for ocean, green for forest, white for snow). Alternatively, have them cut out the templates provided below.
4. Provide students with craft supplies like pipe cleaners, tissue paper, cotton balls, construction paper, and tape or glue. Make sure to supervise the use of materials—consider only passing it to students if they have a plan to use it.
5. Guide students to build or draw parts of the habitat their animal needs:
 - Trees, rocks, snow, grass, water, caves, etc.
 - Remind them: Every animal needs food, water, and shelter.
6. If students draw their animal on a separate piece of paper. If they are able, they may cut it out. If they are unable, please cut out their animal image for them.
7. Help them place their animal inside the habitat and finish decorating. If you need to fill additional time, ask students if the model shows where the animal finds food, water, and shelter. Let students share their habitats with a partner or the group.

MOVMENT BREAK

Ecosystem Charades

Call out an animal (like “frog,” “butterfly,” “bear,” or “fish”) and have the kids act it out using their bodies—hopping, flying, crawling, or swimming. After each turn, ask, “Where does that animal live?” and let them shout out the habitat (pond, forest, ocean, etc.).

EXTENSION

After building your ecosystem, if there is extra time:

- Let kids create a new animal that lives in their habitat—what would it look like? What color would it be?

OBSERVE & EXPLAIN 5 min

Discuss:

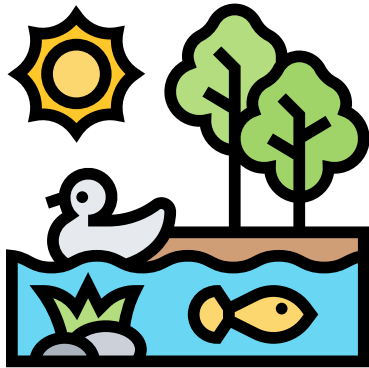
- What habitat did you make?
- What does your animal eat and where does it sleep?
- Could your animal live in a different habitat? Why or why not?



Every animal has a habitat—a special home in nature where it can find everything it needs to live. That includes food, water, air, and shelter (a safe place to rest or hide). Different animals live in different places because their bodies and behaviors are made for those environments.

Some animals live in the forest, where there are lots of trees to climb or hide in—like squirrels or owls. Other animals live in the ocean, where they swim and find food underwater—like fish or sea turtles. Some animals, like camels, live in the desert, where it's hot and dry. And some, like polar bears or penguins, live in cold, snowy places.

In this activity, we used colors, shapes, and craft materials to build those different places—just like scientists and explorers who study the natural world. We thought about what our animal eats, where it finds water, and where it sleeps or hides. That's called thinking like a scientist—asking questions, building models, and using your ideas to learn about the world!



CLEAN UP & DISMISSAL

Students must then clean their workspace. Make sure to leave the classroom the way you found it.

- Have students sort through all materials and return reusable items to their proper bins.
- Dispose of any unusable or broken items in the trash.
- Ask students to carefully carry their completed ecosystems to a designated area to take home.
- Wipe down workstations with a damp cloth or paper towel.
 - Remind students to wash their hands after cleanup.



ECOSYSTEM Handout



