

Let's Explore Animals

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Learning Goals

- Recognize that animals are alive
- Discuss how animals differ in size, body coverings, and movement
- Give examples of animals living on land, underground, in water, and in the air
- Identify specialized body parts that help animals survive
- Explain that animals need shelter, food, water, and protective features to survive

Video Summary

Exploration Segment

As a variety of animals are shown in their environments, the hostess asks children to consider where animals live, how they look, and how they move. At a zoo, children discover that animals have special body parts that help them survive in their natural surroundings. Some animals have camouflage that hides them from their predators. Other special body parts help animals move quickly, fight back, or protect themselves.

Concept Development Segment

People and animals have many of the same needs. The hostess asks children to consider how the homes, food, protective covering, and movement of animals are different or similar to their own. She presents a poem about animal legs.

Application Segment

Animals provide people with things we need, such as food, clothing, companionship, and help for doing certain jobs. "You Try It" challenges students to draw new animals with unique body parts.

Key Words

camouflage	body colors, body parts, or elements of the environment that help animals hide or disguise themselves
mammal	a warm-blooded animal that has hair, two pairs of limbs, and a backbone and feed young with milk
predator	an animal that kills and eats other animals
protection	being shielded or guarded from something that would injure or destroy
reptile	a cold-blooded animal that has skin covered with scales or plates

Let's Do It

- Ask children to describe and compare the pets that they or friends have (if possible, have children bring photographs of the animals to class). Then tell students: *Watch this video to see what you can learn about animals.*
- Begin the tape. Stop/pause the video for discussion after each of the hostess's questions: "Where do these animals live?" "How do they look?" "How do animals move?" Have children describe what they see.
- Continue the tape through the poem about animal legs. Stop/pause the video and help your students compare human needs to animals' needs. On the chalkboard, write these list headings: Home, Food, Covering/Clothing, Movement. Discuss the first heading by asking students what kinds of homes people live in. Then ask for examples of animal homes. Continue in this manner with food, covering /clothing, and movement. When finished with the activity, watch the rest of the video.

You Try It

Can you create a funny animal that has special body parts? Have children make drawings or clay models of animals. Encourage them to include special body parts like those shown in the video or body parts of their own creations.

More Exploring

Play Name That Animal. Watch the video again and ask children to name the animals that appear. Initiate study projects about the animals that children cannot name.

Compare and categorize animal sizes by having students find pictures of animals in books and magazines. Ask children to match the animals' sizes to classroom objects of various sizes (a book, pencil, desk, chalkboard, the ceiling, etc.). If children are unsure of the animals' sizes, look them up in an encyclopedia or animal guide.

How are toy animals like real animals? Have children bring their toy animals to school. As a class, observe the toys' characteristics and discuss which ones are fanciful and which are real. Ask, *How are the toy animals similar to real animals?* How are they different?

Move like animals. Challenge children to move like kangaroos, turtles, snakes, horses, dogs, cats, birds, fish, etc. As a class, discuss why it is important that animals move in these ways. How does it feel to us to move these ways?

Take a walk around the school neighborhood to look for animals.

Help children learn how to observe their neighborhood while being careful of the environment. Keep a chart of what and where students make animal sightings, recording any distinguishing marks that will help children identify the creatures. Back in class, use an animal guide to name those that were unfamiliar to children.

Play Stripe and Slither. Each child chooses an animal from the video and makes mental notes of its body coverings, size, and movements. Then say, "All animals with feathers (or animals that stand bigger than a car, or that swim, etc.) stand up." Continue naming features or movements and having children sit or stand accordingly. Have children choose new animals and play another round.

Make animal flashcards by gluing magazine photos of animals to index cards. Ask students to name the home, food, or movement of each animal.

Explore animal camouflage by having students find pictures of animals and discussing how their colorings help them hide in their surroundings. Extend the activity by asking children how they would dress to hide themselves in a variety of surroundings.

How do animals help us? Have children search for magazine photos of animals helping people or of products that come from animals.

Create a bulletin board of the photos and discuss what people would do if there weren't animals to help in these ways. Also discuss how wild animals help us (by serving as predators in the food chain, maintaining the species, inspiring people, beautifying the land, etc.)

Language arts—Reverse the “Move Like Animals” activity above by asking children to imagine that they are animals who are trying out human activities for the first time. Ask, *What might happen?* Have children discuss the possibilities, write short stories, or draw pictures.



Read the following poem (presented in the video), then answer the questions below.

***Feet* by Aileen Fisher**

Feet of snails are only one.
Birds grow two to hop and run.
Dogs and cats and cows grow four.
Ants and beetles add two more.
Spiders run around on eight,
Which may seem a lot, but wait—
Centipedes have more than thirty
Feet to wash when they get dirty!

- *How many legs does each of these animals have?*

_____ Snails _____ Birds _____ Cows _____ Cats _____ Dogs
_____ Ants _____ Beetles _____ Spiders _____ Centipedes

- Display the chart of animals that students sighted during their walk around the neighborhood (above). *How many legs does each of these animals have?*