

flight for SURVIVAL

Avian Adaptations

Objectives

Students will create an imaginary creature that has some of the adaptations birds have.

Benchmark

5A The Living Environment: Diversity of Life

Materials

- drawing material
- construction paper
- glue
- painting materials
- feathers
- clay

Action

1. Discuss some of the adaptations found in birds. Brainstorm on the various characteristics that help a bird survive in its particular environment.
2. Make a chart on the board describing as many different adaptations, their descriptions, and their advantages or how they would be used. For example, beaks (*adaptation*) could be curved (*description*) like a hawk for eating meat (*advantage*), or long and slender like a hummingbird for reaching nectar in flowers. Feet (*adaptation*) can be webbed (*description*) like a duck, or clawed like an eagle for grasping (*advantage*). Other bird adaptations to consider with students include legs, wings, coloration, vision, tail feathers, etc.
3. Next, brainstorm on various habitats in which birds live and how the adaptations might be useful. Some habitats that might be included in the discussion are desert, rainforest, Antarctic, mountain, etc.
4. Have students create an imaginary bird that is uniquely adapted to a particular habitat. Each student should keep in mind the following as they design their species:
 - Where will the bird live?
 - What will it eat?
 - How does it move (fly, swim, run)?

- How does it raise its young?

5. Discuss how adaptations are intimately connected with the environment in which a species lives.

Deeper Depths

All organisms have a Latin or Greek name so that taxonomists worldwide can communicate. In the 18th century, a Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus created a classification system to separate all organisms into categories. Each has two words, a genus name and a species name which describes it. In this system, called binomial nomenclature, or two-word naming, the genus describes the group to which the organism belongs, and the species describes the specific animal.

Often the Latin genus and species gives insight into to the animal or its behavior. For example, *Myliobatis californica* is the California bat ray; *Falco peregrinus* is the peregrine falcon. Have students create names for their creatures that are descriptive of the bird.

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