



Animal Adaptations

Prek-1<sup>st</sup> grade

Teachers Guide

## Museum of the Gulf Coast

### Description

Discover the diversity of Southeast Texas wetlands and forest animals. Using real furs, skulls, and other hands-on materials from Museum collections, students will explore various animal adaptations that specialize them for their specific habitat.

### Before Your Program/How to Set Up Your Room

- Teacher needs to be present at all times.
- Review the vocabulary with the students
- Please provide at least one clear table at the head of the classroom

### Vocabulary

- 
- **Adaptation**-a body part, body covering, or behavior that helps and animal survive in its environment.
- **Insectivore**-animal that specializes in eating insects
- **Carnivore**-animal that eats meat
- **Omnivore** –animal that eat both plants and animals
- **Food Web**- is a series food chains in an ecosystem. Each living thing is part of multiple food chains in an ecosystem.
- **Predator** –the animal that does the hunting
- **Habitat** –place where an animal lives
- **Prey** –the animal that is hunted
- **Herbivore**- animal that eats only plants

### Texas TEKS

Kindergarten: 112.11 (b)(2)(A),(b)(9)(B)

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: 112.12 (b)(2)(A), (b)(10)(A)

**Program Objective:** This hands-on program allows children to explore how animals adapt to their environment so that they don't get eaten or so that they can find food. The program provides opportunities for the students to observe live animals and artifacts and the adaptations that they use to survive here in Texas.

**Key Concepts:** Adaptations, camouflage

### **Pre-Visit Activity**

**What is an adaptation?** An adaptation is a trait that makes an animal suited to its environment.

**What kinds of adaptations are there?** There are many types of adaptations in the animal kingdom; some for gathering and eating food, some for reproduction and caring for offspring, and some for protection and defense. It can be a behavioral or a structural trait. Here are some examples: Moving in large groups is a behavioral adaptation; it helps protect the members of the group from predators. The thick fur coat of an arctic fox is a structural adaptation. It helps protect it against the cold weather.

Read: **Ducks Don't Get Wet.** By Augusta Goldin and Helen K. Davie

Discuss that all animals have certain body parts and/or behaviors that help them to survive. Ducks live in water, so they have to be able to stay dry. How do they do this?

Watch the video of ducks preening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHfE-p5jcy4>

What are these ducks doing? They are performing a behavior called preening. This spreads oils over their feathers to keep them waterproof.

### Experiment

Materials: 2 pre-cut feather shapes from paper bag for each student

Paint brushes

Oil, water, eyedroppers

### Procedure

1. Pre-cut the feathers out of the paper bag.
2. Have the students paint one of the feathers with oil.
3. Take the eyedropper and drop water on the oil-covered feather and the dry feather. What happens?

## **Post Visit Activity**

Animals have features that make them well suited for where they live and be able to find food. The student will be creating a new creature. Ask the students the following:

What will the animal eat?

Where does the animal live?

How does it catch food?

How does it stay warm?

How does it stay cool?

How does it protect itself from animals that would like to eat it?

What will be the name of your animal?

Give the students the body patterns (or precut them for under children) of the animals. Allow them to use the patterns to put together a new animal. Give the various scrap art pieces such as feathers, construction paper, google eyes