

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Science: **Habitats and Adaptations**



A **habitat** is a place where a collection (group) of plants and animals live. Every plant or animal lives in a *habitat*. The *habitat* provides the plants and animals that live there with all the things they need to survive.

Another name for habitat is *local environment*. An **environment** is the setting in which something lives. Your environment includes everything that surrounds you.

In the wild, all living things are **adapted** to the habitat in which they live. This means that they have special features that help them to survive there.

Animals depend on their physical features and instinctive (natural, untaught) behavior to help them obtain food, keep safe, build homes, withstand weather, and attract mates. These features are called **adaptations**.

*Adaptations* make it possible for the animals to live in a particular place and in a particular way. An African **elephant**, for example, lives in a hot habitat and has very large ears that it flaps to keep cool. A **polar bear**, on the other hand, lives in a cold habitat and has thick fur to keep warm.

Animals in the wild can only live in places they are *adapted* to. They must have the right kind of *habitat*. One where they can find the food, space and living conditions that they need.

The animals and plants in one habitat are **suited** to live there. They may not be able to survive in other habitats. A **woodland owl**, for example, would *not* survive in a desert habitat because there is little water available in the desert and the temperatures there would be much warmer than what the woodland owl is used to.

When a habitat **changes**, the animals and plants that live there may also have to change, or **adapt**, in order to survive. For example, if pond weed is removed from a pond, the fish and snails that rely on the weed for food may starve to death unless they can find another source of food. If they do find another source of food, we say that they have '*adapted to* their new environment.'

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**Questions:**

1. What is a habitat?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is your environment?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What does it mean for a living thing to be adapted to its habitat?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are the physical features and instinctive behavior of an animal called that make it possible for the animal to survive in its natural habitat?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Animals have instinctive behavior—they act instinctively. What does this mean?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What special feature (adaptation) does an African elephant have let lets it keep cool in a hot climate?

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7. What special feature (adaptation) does a Polar bear have that lets it survive in a very cold climate?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why would a woodland owl not survive in a desert habitat?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. If an animals habitat changes, what might the animal have to do in order to survive?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What are some things an animal needs in order to survive?