

Introduction to Animal Classification: Mini Habitat Project

Florida Benchmark: SC.3.L.15.1 - Classify animals into major groups according to their physical characteristics and behaviors.

NGSS Standard: 3-LS3-1 - Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and variation of these traits exists in a group of similar organisms.

Objective: Students will explore the six major animal groups—mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects—by creating a **mini habitat** for one or more of the groups. They will design and construct an artificial habitat that meets the needs of their chosen animal group(s).

Materials:

- Shoebox, plastic container, or small tank
- Natural materials (soil, rocks, plants, twigs)
- Water (if needed for aquatic or amphibian habitats)
- Small plastic toy animals (optional)
- Labels and paper for descriptions
- Colored paper, markers, glue, and scissors for decoration
- Cotton balls, fabric, or moss for texture and realism

Safety Precautions:

- Handle materials carefully to avoid injury.
- If using live plants or water, ensure proper care and maintenance.
- Do not use real animals in the habitat.

Procedures:

1. **Choose an Animal Group:** Select one of the six major animal groups or combine two or three groups in a shared habitat.
2. **Research Habitat Needs:** Determine the specific environment, food sources, and shelter needed for the chosen animal group(s).
3. **Plan the Habitat Design:** Sketch a rough design of the habitat before building.
4. **Construct the Habitat:** Use a shoebox, plastic container, or small tank to build the habitat. Add natural materials like soil, rocks, and plants to mimic the environment.
5. **Enhance with Details:** Create labels and descriptions to explain the purpose of different elements in the habitat.
6. **Final Adjustments:** Ensure the habitat includes key survival components such as food sources, shelter, and water (if applicable).
7. **Display the Habitat:** Place the completed habitat in a designated area for class viewing.

Note: Clean-up

- Dispose of materials properly.
- Store reusable materials for future projects.
- Ensure all workspaces are tidy and free of debris.