

Avian Adventures

Grades: Elementary (3-5)

Key Words and Definitions

HABITAT	The home or specific environment of an animal or organism
PREENING	The act of grooming with a beak, especially by rearranging the barbs and barbules of the feathers and by distributing oil
PREDATOR	An animal that obtains food by hunting and eating other animals
PREY	An animal that gets eaten by a predator

Pre-Field Trip Activity: Design a Bird

One 20-minute session; pre-visit

Learning Objective

Students will learn about bird anatomy and adaptations, using this knowledge to develop their creativity by designing a bird from their imagination to live in a specific habitat.

Materials

- Markers
- Pencils
- Crayons
- White Paper

Procedure

1. Begin with a discussion of the different adaptations of bird's wings, beaks, and feet, telling students that we'll be looking for different kinds of birds during our field trip at Wave Hill.
2. Ask students to name different kinds of bird feet (talons, webbed feet, etc.) and why each bird might need that kind of foot (to grab prey, to swim, for running, etc.)
3. Remind students that wings, beaks, and feet are all special adaptations that help these birds to survive
4. Tell students that they are going to design and draw a bird with special adaptations to help it survive in a particular habitat. They must come up with a habitat as well as a food source for the bird. They also may want to imagine what the bird's nest would look like. Each bird will have special wings, beak, and feet. Students may imagine other adaptations too.
5. Students will have to explain the bird that they've created and the rationale for its adaptations.
6. Hand out paper, crayons, pencils, and markers. Urge students to take their time to really imagine a habitat, food source, and bird adaptations.
7. Have students share their birds and the rationale for their adaptation and habitat choices with the class . Ask if students think their birds would be able to live comfortably in the habitat they designed, and what did they include in their design that is specific to this habitat?

Sources

-  [Bird beak handout | Kids Growing Strong](#)
-  [Cockatoo Body Language | The Animal Behavior Center | Illustration by Lili Chin](#)
-  [Beaks/feet handout | The Remarkable Adaptations of Birds to Their Environment - Cabrillo National Monument \(U.S. National Park Service\) - Cabrillo Field Notes \(nps.gov\)](#)

Post-Field Trip Activity: Bird Behaviors

One 20-minute session; post-visit

Learning Objective

Students will learn about behavioral adaptations by playing charades with the bird behaviors they observed at Wave Hill and working as a class to discuss how those behaviors help birds survive.

Procedure

1. Hand each student a small piece of paper on which to write one bird behavior they learned about at Wave Hill. Once everyone has written their behavior down, they will place it into a bowl or bag that's passed around.
2. Divide the class into two large teams, who will alternate guessing and acting out behaviors.
3. Students take turns—either one by one or in pairs, depending on size of the class—picking papers out of the bowl/bag and silently acting them out.
4. Each team will guess which behavior the members of their group are embodying. Trying to be as quick as possible, students will act out, then switch team members to act out a different behavior until a one-minute timer runs out.
5. Groups will switch until everyone's had a turn acting and guessing.
6. Tally up points to see who wins! Whoever got the most correct guesses in the one-minute time period can do a celebratory bird dance.

Sources

 [Bird charades activity: Bird Language Charades - Flying Deer Nature Center](#)



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Materials

- Open space for students to act out behaviors
- Small pieces of paper and a pen
- A bowl or bag
- Poster board or large post-it paper, markers, writing paper and pencils