

## **Creative Dance Lesson Plan on Animal Adaptations**

**Grade:** 2nd

**Length:** 45 minutes

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**Student Learning Outcome:** The students will demonstrate an understanding of how specific animals make adaptations to their environments through in class activities and an end of class discussion.

**Equipment Needed:** Hand Drum; CD player; CD with creative dance music; Animal posters; masking tape square in the middle of the floor (if you're in a gym you can use the center circle or other lines on the floor); curvy, straight, and bent word cards.

### **Utah Core – Science**

Standard 4: Life Science. Students will gain an understanding of Life Science through the study of changes in organisms over time and the nature of living things.

Objective 2: Identify basic needs of living things (plants and animals) and their abilities to meet their needs.

- a. Communicate and justify how the physical characteristics of living things help them meet their basic needs.

### **Behavioral Expectations: (3 minutes)**

We have two rules for class today:

1. Always keep space around yourself. Never touch anyone else, the walls, or the steps unless I ask you to.
2. When the music or the drumming stops, you must freeze!

Let's practice. When the music starts, gallop around the room, but when it stops you must freeze! Don't move even one eyelash!

### **Experience/Identify: (2 minutes)**

Animals live very differently from humans. Some live in water, some live in the desert, and some live high in the tops of trees in the rainforest. Animals have adaptations that allow them to live how and where they do. Look around the room. There are eight posters hanging on the wall (backwards so students cannot see the pictures). On the other side of each poster is a picture of an animal that has an adaptation we will learn about using dance. Who would like to pick the first poster?

### **Explore/Investigate: (35 minutes)**

The activities do not need to be in any specified order. When the students picks a poster, let him or her show the picture to the class, then hang it in the front of the room and do the associated activity.

#### Giraffes

Giraffes have very long necks. Why do you think their necks are so long? In the African Sahara, where giraffes live, there is not a lot of vegetation, so giraffes have long necks to reach the highest food on the tree that no other animals can reach. When the music starts, everyone try reaching. Reaching for the very tops of the trees! Can you reach with your head? toes? elbows? How else can you reach?

### Coral Snake and Scarlet King Snake

(Hang these posters right next to each other and use them as a pair). These are two different species of snakes, but they look very similar. One of these snakes is very poisonous and one is not poisonous at all. Does anyone know which is which? The coral snake is poisonous and the king snake is not. Many scientists believe that the scarlet king snake adapted to look like the coral snake so that other animals would think it was poisonous too. This would help the king snake from being eaten by predators. The science word for this is "Batesian mimicry," but that simply means "copy-cat." Can you tell the difference in the pattern on the snakes? There is a rhyme to help you remember, "Red on yellow, kill a fellow, red on black, won't kill Jack." For this animal, we will do shadow partners. On the count of three, be standing elbow to elbow with a partner. Decide who will go first. First partner, when the music turns on, you will start to move. Second partner, stand directly behind your partner and copy-cat whatever they do, just like you were their shadow. Switch roles.

### Sting Ray

Sting rays have several adaptations. They swim very quickly, can sting their prey with their tails, and they can blend in to the ocean floor. How do they blend in to the ocean floor? They are flat and are colored like the sand. When the music starts, start moving very quickly, like a sting ray, but as soon as it stops, freeze in a low shape and don't move. I will run around your low shapes, see if you can sting me with your hand when I come by. Make sure that you don't move anything but your hand, just like sting rays will move their tails.

### Clown Fish

Clown fish have a special adaptation to where they live. Clown fish can swim among the tentacles of a sea anemone without getting hurt. Other fish are poisoned by the sea anemone. This helps to keep clown fish safe from predators. (Play an adapted version of sharks and minnows). This square on the floor is our sea anemone. All of you are clown fish and I am a much bigger fish. Only clown fish can go inside of the square. When the music starts, begin swimming around the square. If the music stops, run to the inside of the square where you are safe from the big fish. If I tag you before you reach the square, then you have to come join me and be a big fish.

### Sea Horse

Sea horses can camouflage. What does camouflage mean? It can blend in to adapt to its environment. Pick four students to be "sea horses." The rest of the class will be the coral reef. The teacher is the predator. While the sea horses close their eyes, show a curvy, bent, or straight word card to the class. They will make the specified kind of shape and freeze. When I say go, sea horses turn around and run over to your classmates. You must decide if they are making a curvy, straight or bent shape, and make the same kind of shape so that you blend in to your environment. If you don't blend in before I, the predator, tag you, then you have to be a predator with me.

### Koala

Koalas have specially adapted hands that grip trees so they can climb to the very top. Humans have special hands too. Why are our hands special? (dexterity, opposable thumbs).

What do they help us to do? When I beat my drum, make an action shape that shows something humans can do because of our special hands.

### Owls

Owls have several adaptations because they are nocturnal. What does nocturnal mean? They are awake at night. At night, owls cannot see very well, so their eyes are larger than many animals. They also have very keen hearing. They listen to hear their prey. When the music starts, move in a high level, like an owl flying at night. Listen closely to hear my drum. If you hear me beat my drum, freeze in a low shape, as if you swooped down to catch your prey.

### **Create/Perform: (As time permits)**

If time allows, instruct students to pick their two favorite animals from today's lesson. What movements did we do today in class to show how these animals adapt to their environments? Create an animal movement "sandwich" (this is called an ABA choreographic pattern), doing one animal's movement, then another animal, then back to the first animal (i.e. reach like a giraffe, move quickly and freeze like a stingray, then reach like a giraffe again).

### **Connect/Analyze: (5 minutes)**

Why does each of these animals have its specific adaptation? To keep predators from eating it? To better find food? To better catch prey?