

Island Explorers: Classifying Philippine Life by Habitat

Lesson Overview

Subject: Science / Biology

Target Age: 9 Years Old (Grade 4)

Duration: 60–75 minutes

Learning Objectives: By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Define and distinguish between **terrestrial**, **aquatic**, and **aerial** habitats.
- Identify at least three animals and two plants native to the Philippines for each habitat category.
- Create a visual classification diagram (map or chart) to organize Philippine species based on where they live.

Materials Needed

- Large sheet of poster paper or a dedicated science notebook
- Colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Printed "Philippine Species Cards" (or a list of names/descriptions provided in this lesson)
- Glue stick and scissors
- Access to a globe or map of the Philippines (optional but helpful)

1. Introduction (The Hook)

The "Nature Passport" Challenge

The Scenario: "Imagine you are a famous explorer traveling across the 7,641 islands of the Philippines! You have been hired by the National Museum to create a guide for new travelers. But there's a problem—the museum needs to know exactly where these plants and animals live so tourists know where to look for them. Are they on the ground, under the waves, or high in the sky?"

Discussion Question: "If you wanted to find a *Tarsier*, would you bring a snorkel or hiking boots? Why?"

2. Body: Content & Practice

I DO: Defining the Three Homes (10 mins)

Explain the three main habitats using simple terms:

- **Terrestrial (Land):** From the word "terra" meaning earth. These are plants and animals that live, breathe, and grow on solid ground (forests, mountains, plains).

Example: The **Tamaraw** (Mindoro Dwarf Buffalo) or the **Narra Tree**.

- **Aquatic (Water):** From the word "aqua." These are species that live in the ocean, rivers, or lakes.

Example: The **Butanding** (Whale Shark) or **Seaweed**.

- **Aerial (Air):** These are animals that spend a lot of their active time flying or moving through the air. (Note: While they nest on land, their primary way of moving and hunting is in the sky).

Example: The **Philippine Eagle** or the **Philippine Flying Lemur** (Kagwang).

WE DO: The Habitat Sorting Game (15 mins)

Let's look at this list of famous Philippine residents. Together, let's decide which "home" they belong to:

- **Bangus (Milkfish):** (Answer: Aquatic)
- **Waling-Waling (Orchid):** (Answer: Terrestrial - though it grows on trees, it's a land-based plant!)
- **Tarsier:** (Answer: Terrestrial)
- **Pawikan (Sea Turtle):** (Answer: Aquatic - they visit land to lay eggs, but live in the sea!)
- **Philippine Scops Owl:** (Answer: Aerial)
- **Mangrove Tree:** (Answer: Both/Aquatic-Edge - Explain how some plants live right where water meets land!)

YOU DO: The "Bio-Map" Project (30 mins)

Instructions:

1. Divide your large paper into three sections. You can draw them as a **Mountain (Aerial)**, **Forest Floor (Terrestrial)**, and **Deep Blue Sea (Aquatic)**.
2. Draw or paste at least 3 animals and 2 plants into each section.
3. Label each species with its name.
4. **The Connection:** Use arrows to show how they might interact (e.g., the Philippine Eagle flying over the forest to find food).

3. Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

Summary: Today we learned that the Philippines is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth! We can classify our unique plants and animals by where they live: Land (Terrestrial), Water (Aquatic), or Air (Aerial).

The "Quick-Fire" Recap:

- Where does a *Dugong* live? (Water/Aquatic)
- What is a *Terrestrial* plant we discussed? (Narra or Waling-Waling)
- Why is it important for a scientist to classify animals by their habitat? (To know how to protect their homes!)

Success Criteria

The learner has succeeded if they can:

- Correctly place the Philippine Eagle in the "Aerial" category.
- Identify that the Butanding or Bangus are "Aquatic."
- Explain that "Terrestrial" refers to land-based life.

- Produce a completed diagram that is organized and labeled.

Assessment Methods

Formative (During the lesson): Check for understanding during the "Sorting Game" by asking the student to justify *why* they put a species in a certain category.

Summative (End of lesson): Evaluate the "Bio-Map" project. Does it accurately separate the three categories? Are there at least 15 items total (3 animals/2 plants per category)?

Differentiation & Adaptations

- **For Struggling Learners:** Provide a printed sheet with the animals already drawn, and have the student color-code them (e.g., Blue for Aquatic, Green for Terrestrial, Yellow for Aerial) before gluing them onto the map.
- **For Advanced Learners:** Research "Brackish Water" (where salt and fresh water mix) or "Epiphytes" (plants like some Philippine orchids that grow on other plants) and add these specialized sub-categories to the diagram.
- **Multi-Sensory Option:** Create a "Habitat Diorama" using three shoeboxes instead of a flat drawing, using clay to mold the animals.