

Wild Wonders: A Day as a Zookeeper

Lesson Overview

Subject: Science / Life Systems

Target Age: 6 Years Old (Grade 1)

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Topic: Animal Classifications, Habitats, and Basic Needs

Learning Objectives

- Identify three main groups of animals found at the zoo: Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles.
- Describe what an animal needs to survive (Food, Water, Shelter, Space).
- Design a zoo habitat that meets a specific animal's needs.

Materials Needed

- Small plastic toy animals (or printed pictures of animals)
- A shoebox or a small tray (for the habitat build)
- Art supplies: Crayons, markers, construction paper
- Nature items (optional): Twigs, leaves, or stones from outside
- Building blocks (LEGO, Duplo, or wooden blocks)
- Three bowls or baskets labeled: "Mammals," "Birds," and "Reptiles"

1. Introduction: The Zookeeper's Morning Hook

The Hook: Put on an imaginary hat. "Good morning, Head Zookeeper! Today is a very busy day at the zoo. We have new animals arriving, and we need to make sure they have the right homes and that we know how to take care of them. Are you ready to start your rounds?"

Learning Goals in Kid-Talk: "Today we are going to learn how to tell the difference between furry, feathery, and scaly animals. Then, you're going to help me design a brand-new home for an animal!"

2. Body: Content and Practice

Part A: The Three Big Groups (I Do)

Explain that animals are grouped by how they look and live. Use these simple talking points:

- **Mammals:** "These animals usually have hair or fur. They breathe air like us and feed their babies milk. Examples: Lions, Elephants, Zebras."
- **Birds:** "These animals have feathers and wings. They hatch from eggs. Examples: Flamingos, Penguins, Parrots."

- **Reptiles:** "These animals have dry, scaly skin. Most like to sunbathe to stay warm! Examples: Snakes, Crocodiles, Turtles."

Part B: The Sorting Station (We Do)

Place a mix of toy animals or pictures on the table. Work together to put them in the correct labeled baskets.

- **Guidance:** "Look at this Giraffe. Does it have feathers or fur? That's right, it's a mammal! Into the Mammal basket it goes."
- **Discussion:** Ask, "What does this animal eat? Does it need a big pool of water or a tall tree?"

Part C: Habitat Architect (You Do)

The student chooses one favorite zoo animal. Their task is to build a "home" (habitat) for that animal using a shoebox, blocks, or paper.

Success Criteria (The "Must-Haves"):

1. **Food:** Something for the animal to eat (e.g., green paper for grass).
2. **Water:** A place to drink (e.g., a blue paper pond).
3. **Shelter:** A place to sleep or hide (e.g., a cave made of stones or a block "house").
4. **Space:** Room for the animal to move around.

3. Conclusion: Closing the Gates

Recap: Have the student give a "VIP Tour" of their habitat. Ask them to explain why they chose certain items for their animal.

The "Zookeeper's Quiz" (Quick Check):

- "Point to an animal with feathers."
- "What is one thing every animal needs to stay alive?"
- "If a reptile gets cold, where might it go in its zoo home?"

Takeaway: "Great job today, Zookeeper! You learned that every animal is unique and needs a special kind of care to stay happy and healthy."

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe the sorting activity. Can the student correctly identify which animal belongs in which group with minimal help?
- **Summative:** Review the habitat build. Does it include all four essential elements (Food, Water, Shelter, Space)?

Adaptability & Extensions

- **For Struggling Learners:** Focus only on Mammals vs. Birds. Use a checklist with pictures for the habitat "Must-Haves."
- **For Advanced Learners:** Introduce the concept of "Herbivore" vs. "Carnivore." Ask them to write

or dictate a "Care Guide" for their animal, including what time it needs to be fed.

- **Classroom/Group Variation:** Have students work in teams to create a "Mega Zoo" by connecting their shoebox habitats together with "paths" made of masking tape.