



Tour Theme: Animals (grades 3-5)

Pre-Visit Activity #1:

Desert Adaptations – Match Game

Students should be able to understand that animals survive in the desert due to the **adaptations** they make. Just like desert plants many animals have adapted their bodies and changed their habits to beat the heat or to find food, water, shelter and protection from predators.

Animals and insects that are found at the Springs Preserve:

Gila Monster	Desert Tortoise	Tarantula
Lizard	Big Horn Sheep	Scorpion
Grey Fox	Kangaroo Rat	Brown Recluse
Bobcat	Cottontail Rabbit	Black Widow
Sidewinder Snake	Pocket Mouse	Centipede
Pallid Bats	Antelope Ground Squirrel	Dragon Fly
Mallard Duck	Red Tailed Hawk	Gopher

Lesson:

1. Assign one desert animal or insect per student. Then hand out one blank index card to each student. Have the students write the name of the animal or insect on one side of the index card.
2. The students will do research online or at the library to find two adaptations that their animal makes in order to survive in the desert. They are to write the adaptations on the other side of the index card. *Please note they are not to use the animal's name in the explanation of the adaptation.*
3. Have the students turn in their index cards to begin the "Match Game." The goal of the game is to match the adaptation to the animal – you may leave the list of animals on the board. To make it more challenging, you could include more animals and insects.
4. Divide the class into two groups.
5. Mix the cards up and read out the first adaptation. To prevent groups from yelling out, you could assign one group to go first.
6. Each group may make only one guess per turn. If the first group can match the animal to the adaptation, they get a point. If they can't or are incorrect, the other group may try to make the match and earn a point.

7. The game ends when all of the animals have been matched. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Debrief:

Review the animals and insects and their adaptations and why it is so important to be able to adapt in order to survive in our desert with very little water and a great deal of heat.

Conclude with reading the book, *How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears* by Heather Irbinskas.