

Lesson Plan

Animal Hybrids

Book: Coyotes

Series: Animals of North America

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students understand the various types of habitats in which animals live, and to explore the features and behaviors that make specific animals suited to those habitats.

Supplies

- *Coyotes*
- Paper and pencils
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Before the Activity

Read through the *Coyotes* book, or assign it to the students to read on their own.

Activity

The “That’s Amazing!” section on page 20 of the *Coyotes* book describes coywolves. These animals are part coyote and part wolf. Choose a volunteer to read page 20 out loud. Then ask the following questions:

- What traits do coywolves have that coyotes do not? (Answer: Coywolves have longer legs, larger jaws, and smaller ears).
- How could these new traits help the coywolves survive? (Answer: Longer legs could help coywolves run faster, and larger jaws could help them catch prey.)
- How could these new traits be a disadvantage? (Answer: Smaller ears could make it harder for coywolves to hear.)

Ask the students to imagine that they can combine any two animals to create a new, hybrid animal. The students should draw a diagram of this hybrid animal, using the “Parts of a Coyote” diagram on page 12 as an example. The diagram should use arrows to label the animal’s important or interesting body parts. The students should label at least five body parts.

The students should also write a short paragraph about their animal. The paragraph should answer the following questions:

1. What is the animal called?
2. Which two animals does it combine?
3. Which traits from each animal does it have?
4. Which traits from the animals are blended together?
5. How could these traits help the hybrid animal survive?

Evaluation

Give the students 1 point for each body part they label and 2 points for each question they answer correctly, for a total of 15 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' writing standards, grade 4 (W 4.4) and the National Science Education Standards' Content Standard C, grades K–4.