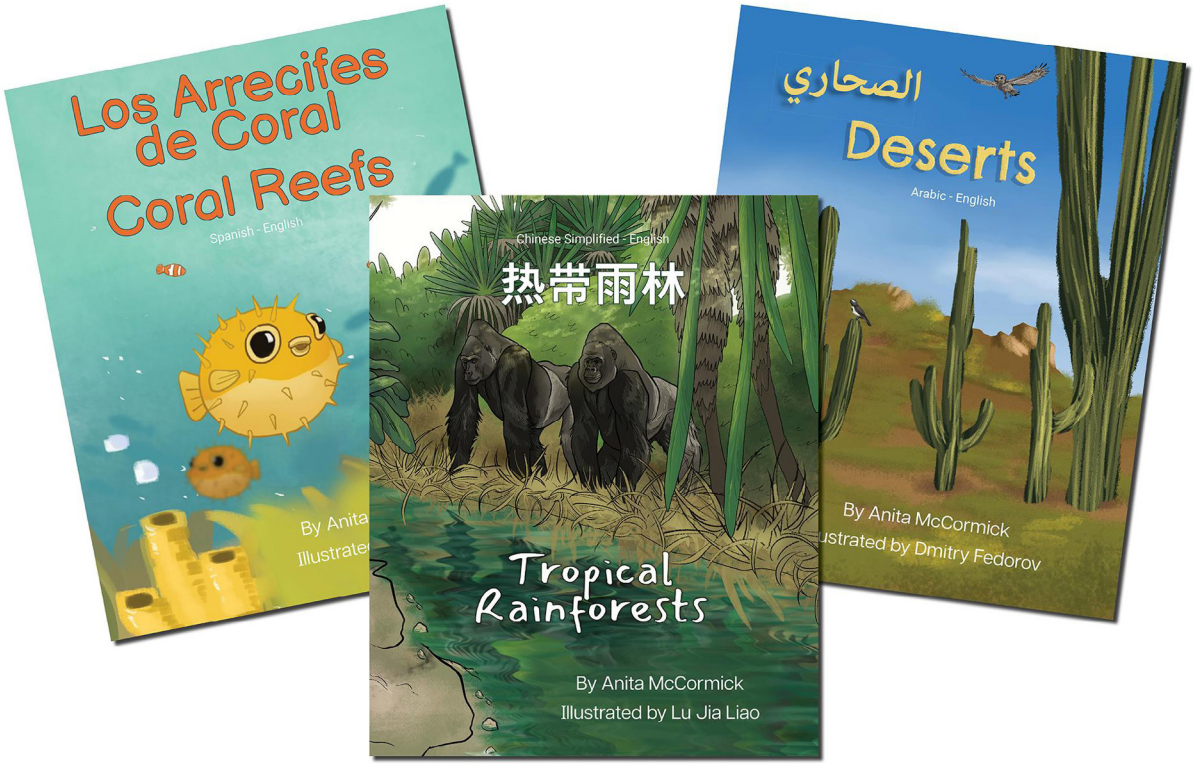
THEME: Introductory Lesson - Animals in their Habitats



Lesson Goal: To understand the meaning of the words 'habitat', 'environment', and 'biome', and how different animals live in different places.

Books Used in Lesson:

Introduction to lessons based on the books:

- ***Coral Reefs*** by Anita McCormick
- ***Deserts*** by Anita McCormick
- ***Tropical Rainforests*** by Anita McCormick

Snapshot of Lesson:

Understanding the meaning of the words 'environment', 'habitat', and 'biome', what different habitats around the world look like, and which animals belong to which environment.

This lesson will also give an overview of the features of animals that make them unique in order to be able to survive in their environment.

Background Information and Discussion Points for Facilitator:

- Animals can survive in many different kinds of environments. Each environment has a different set of conditions that make it unique.
- The environment that an animal lives in is called the animal's habitat.
- A group of living creatures within an environment is called a biome. Every habitat has a biome that is unique to that environment.
- Animals adapt to their environment, giving the animals that live within a specific habitat a set of characteristics that make survival in their habitat natural. For example, animals that live in the rainforest are typically good climbers; they can make a home amongst the trees as well as chase prey. Animals in the desert have thick skin on the soles of their feet to avoid getting burned, etc.

Grade Level: 2-5 (Note: the activities in this lesson plan can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific group of children, at the discretion of the facilitator.)

Time Frame: 30-40 minutes

Objectives:

- **Knowledge:** understand the meaning of the words environment, habitat, and biome, and which animals live in what environments.
- **Skills:** identify various environments and place animals in the correct environments.
- **Attitudes:** develop an appreciation and awareness of the various environments in our world and how various animals live in different habitats.

Essential Questions:

- What is a habitat?
- What is a biome?
- What animals live in which kinds of environments?
- What similarities/characteristics/features do animals living in the same environment share? Why are these features important within this environment?

Materials and Resources: sorting activity (printed images of various habitats, various animal cutouts); interactive whiteboard; paper; markers.

Linkage and Integration Across Subject Areas:

- **Social Studies -** Geography and Science, Climate Change, and Habitats.
- **Literacy -** Oral language development.

Procedure:

- **Introduction:** Elicit the children's general prior knowledge of various kinds of animals and the names of different animals around the world. As the children call out different animals, on a piece of paper or on a whiteboard, the facilitator will write down the words. As the facilitator writes down each of the animals called out by the children, they will group them according to their habitat, i.e., any sea creatures mentioned will be grouped together in a list, any safari animals will be listed together, etc. Once the students have shared animals known to them, the facilitator will draw the children's attention to the categories of animals they have devised based on the children's suggestions. The facilitator will ask the children if they can explain why they have categorized the animals in this way, i.e., they live in the same habitats.

- **Vocabulary Development:**
  In order to engage with the chosen texts, the students will need to be aware of the meaning of the following words:
  - **Habitat:** the natural home of a living thing.
  - **Temperature:** how hot or cold a person, place, or thing is.
  - **Species:** a group of living things that share similar characteristics.
  - **Biome:** the naturally occurring living creatures in an environment. (morphology lesson- meaning of the suffix bio. *For older elementary classes*).

  Vocabulary Acquisition: To learn the new vocabulary, the facilitator will present the new word, along with a child-friendly definition that uses concepts and language that are familiar to the child. Where possible, the facilitator should use concepts and terms in the child's home language to allow for the cross-lingual transfer between language skills and knowledge in their home language and in the language being acquired.

  Once a child-friendly definition has been shared, the students can create their own definition to confirm their understanding of the term.

  To see how these terms are all interrelated, the student, with the assistance of the facilitator, could create a graphic organizer to show how each of these terms are related, and how each definition stems from the understanding of each of the terms. For example, environments provide habitats to support the biome which is composed of creatures from different species.

Alternatively, a vocabulary 4-square could be created using all the child's knowledge of language, both their home language and any other languages being learned. Children that come from homes that speak a language other than English could discuss the terms with their families using the vocabulary 4-square.
See an example template of a vocabulary 4-square below:

Word and Translation:

Definition:	Synonym:
Let's use it in a sentence:	Picture:

With older grades, an extension activity would be to study the morphology (composition) of the word biome - bio meaning living thing - looking at other words that contain this suffix and the ways in which these words are interrelated.

- **Development:** Again, the facilitator will draw the student's attention to the categories that were created as the children brainstormed animals known to them. Building on their new vocabulary knowledge, the facilitator will lead a discussion with the children about the different environments each of the categories of animals live in, and the features of each of these environments. For example, what kind of weather is in a rainforest, what the environment looks like, etc.

  Once the features of the given environment have been identified, the facilitator will draw the students' attention to the animals belonging to this environment: What features do they share? How would these features be purposeful or useful in their given environment? Would this animal survive in a different environment? Why or why not? What would this animal have to change about itself to live in a different habitat/amongst a different biome?

- **Group Work Activity:** In order to establish their understanding of animals living and adapting to various environments, the students will complete a sorting activity

either individually or in groups to establish their understanding of how different animals are suited to different environments/habitats based on their features, and to consolidate their understanding of which animals live in which environments.

- **Conclusion:** The facilitator will discuss with the students which animals they placed in each environment during the sorting activity. The facilitator will ask the name of each environment, and a feature of that environment, as well as a feature of the animals that belong to that habitat, to ensure an understanding as to how animals adapt to their environment.

Assessment:

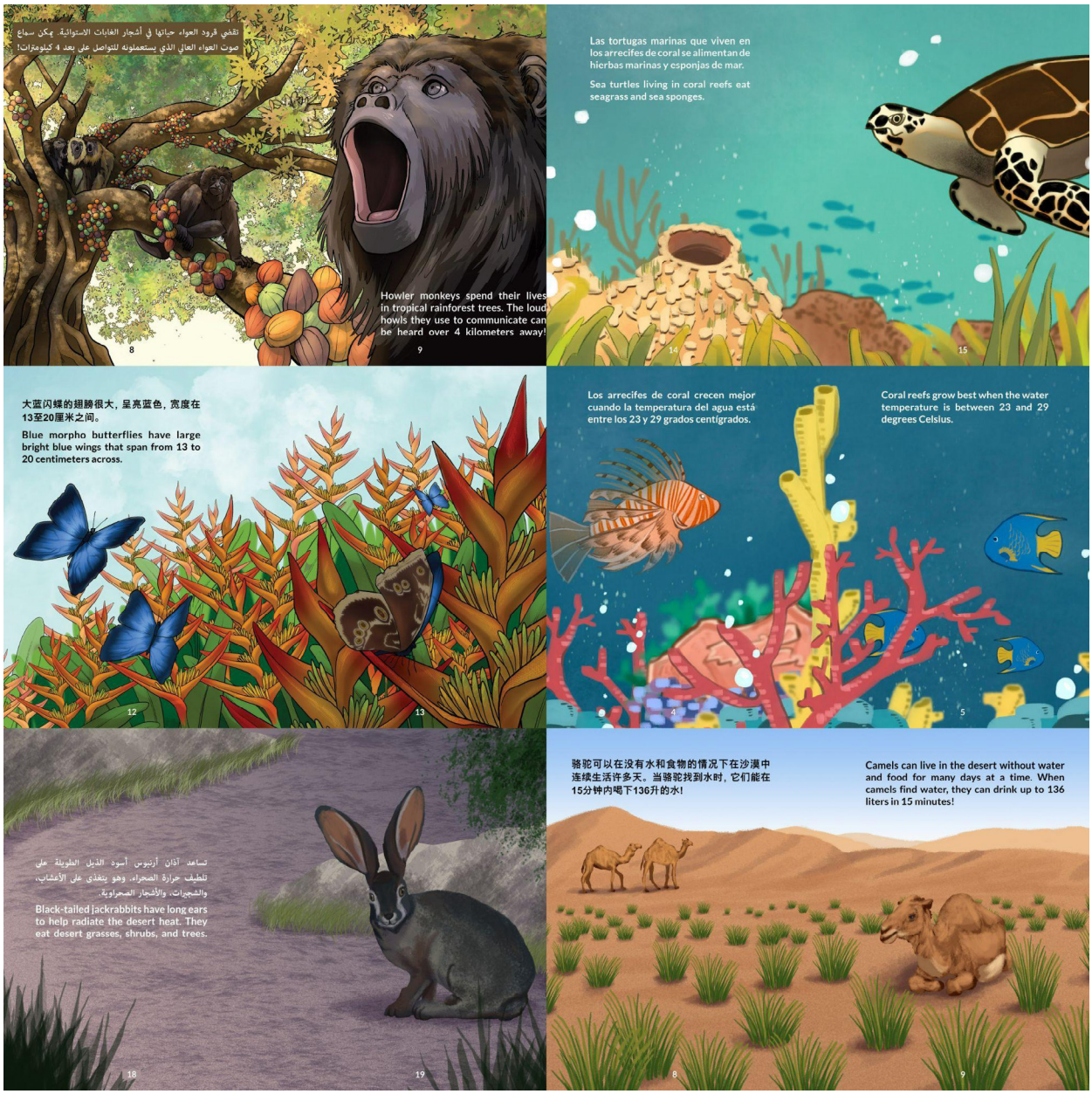
- **Questioning:** The students will be asked literal, inferential, and evaluative questions by the teacher during and after the interactive read-aloud to promote deeper thinking about the text and assess whether the class has developed a coherent understanding of the text.

- **Observation:** The facilitator will observe the student's learning: Are they able to apply the knowledge they are acquiring? Are they focused and interested in the topic at hand in order to facilitate proficient learning?

- **Sorting Task:** Assessment of the child's ability to sort animals into different categories based on the environment in which they live and rationalize why the biome belongs to that habitat.

Accommodations/Differentiation:

- **Differential Questioning:** Use of higher and lower order questioning (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative questions).
- **Wait Time:** Provide extra wait time and language scaffolds/supports for students who need them (e.g., showing pages from the books, sentence starters).
- **Visual Supports:** All students (but especially English language learners) will benefit from pictures accompanying the vocabulary to be learned in the story.



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