

Wonderfully Wild Unit
LESSON 5: Grades 4-6
IN SOMEONE ELSE’S PAWS, HOOVES OR CLAWS

Show Me Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 & 4.6
Knowledge Goals: Communication Arts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6; Science 3, 4 & 8; Fine Arts 1, 2 & 4

Objective: To help foster compassion and empathy in students by encouraging them to imagine what it might be like to be a wild animal. Students will utilize persuasive writing and speaking to make others aware of the plight of wild animals in their communities and encourage them to act on behalf of the animals.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Resource materials (wildlife magazines, newspaper articles, encyclopedias, internet, science books, various non-fiction books about animals, etc.)
- Socks, fabric, glue, googly eyes, other craft items
- “Story of My Life” handout
- “Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be” handout

Method:

1. Give students 60 seconds to make a list of their favorite things to do and eat. Once their lists are comprised, have each student share one of their favorites with the class.
2. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine that they are trapped in a cage. Imagine what it would feel like not to be able to do or eat any of the things they enjoy. With their eyes still closed, read the poem “*Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be*”. When finished, ask students to open their eyes and share how they are feeling using one or two words only. Discuss these feelings and draw the conclusion that this is what it feels like to a wild animal that has been captured. Ask the students if it is fair for us to take an animal from his family to keep as our pet to look at and play with when we feel like it.
3. Put the students in groups of 2-4 and have them select an animal that is often captured as a pet and held in captivity. Explain to the students that they are now going to try not to think about themselves right now. They are going to put themselves in another creature’s paws, hooves or claws and really imagine what it feels like to be that animal, who has been trapped and is being kept as a pet.
4. Using the available resources, they will research and make a list of the things that their animal does on a daily basis in the wild. Describe their habitat and role. Have them describe what they know about this animal’s care if he/she was a pet (kept in an aquarium, fed dead crickets, etc.).
5. Once this background research has been done, the students will create a short puppet play/script about this animal and his/her feelings about being captured. Obviously, the animal would be the main character. Other characters could be the animal’s family, the person who captures the animal, etc. The moral of the story should be that the human has good intentions to care for the animal but then realizes that the animal is unhappy and sets him free.
6. Give the students time to create puppets that represent the characters in their play and time to practice their puppet plays.
7. Have the students present their puppet plays to the class. Celebrate their performances and discuss the plays.

Call to Action: Arrange for your students to perform their puppet shows for the younger students in the school to help spread the message about leaving wildlife alone. Shows could also be performed at an open house or a special performance for parents. Explain that they are helping animals by spreading the word!

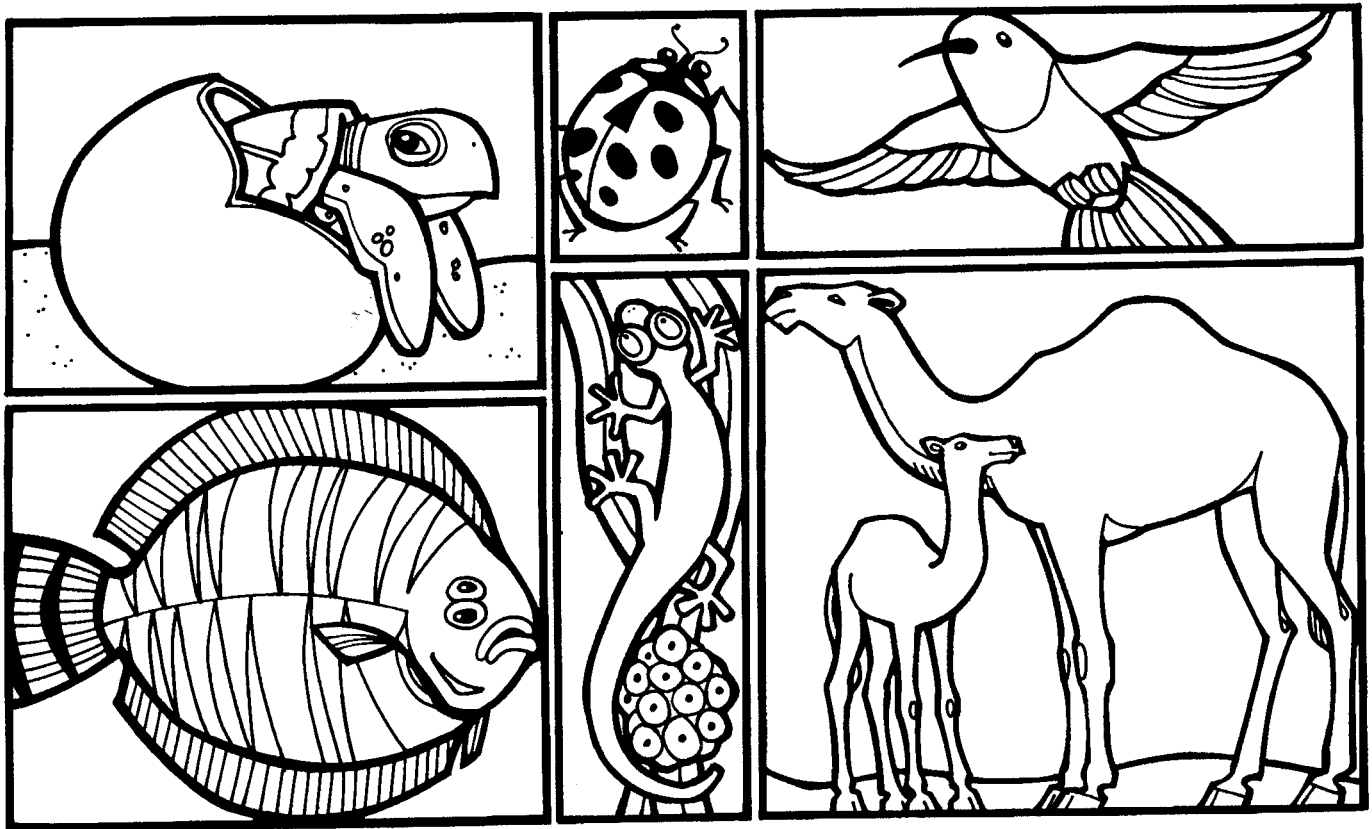
Web sites: For recommended animal-related web sites visit www.apamo.org and choose “Animal Issues” from the left-side menu, then choose “Links” from the top of the page. Or [click here](#) to launch your browser and link directly to the list.

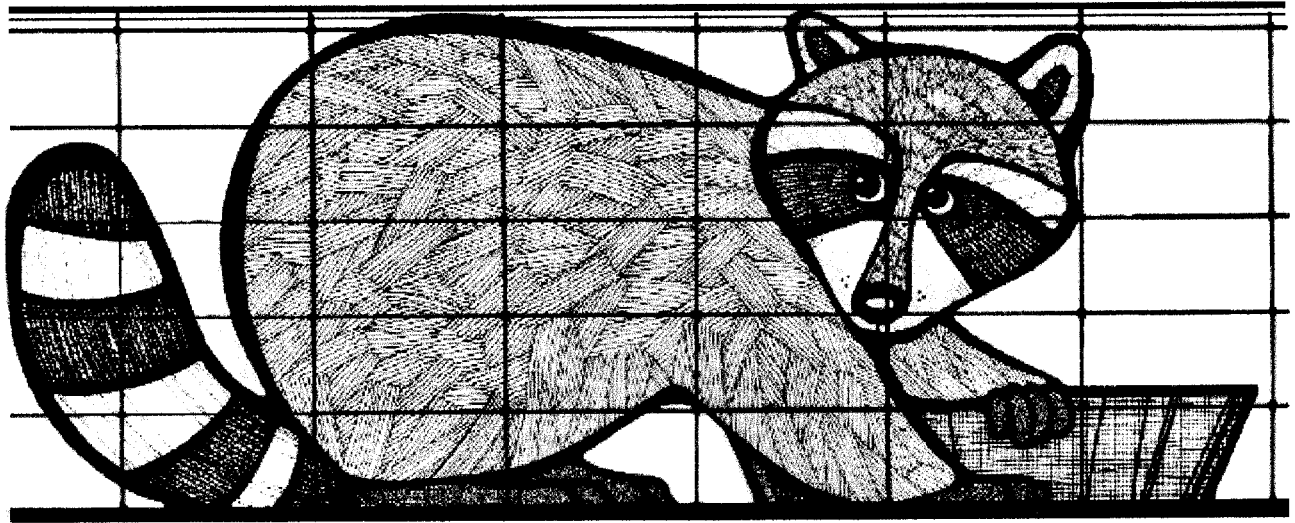
Story of My Life

An *autobiography* is a true story about someone's life. It is written in the *first person* point of view. That means the person writing the story is telling about his or her own life.

What if animals could write their own life stories? Choose a wild animal to research. Use information from wildlife books and encyclopedias to write the animal's autobiography. (Don't forget to write it from the animal's point of view, using words like *I*, *me*, and *my*.) Include details like:

- where and when you were born;
- whether you have brothers and sisters who share your birthday;
- what you did when you were very young;
- when you became old enough to survive on your own;
- whether you live alone, in a pair, or in a group;
- dangers you might have faced from people and other animals;
- how you spend your days or nights; for example, playing, defending your territory, finding food, building shelter;
- places you may travel to in the spring or fall.





WHERE THE WILD THINGS SHOULDN'T BE

How would you like to live in a cage
That was just about ten feet square,
With no toys to play with and nothing to do,
Just you and a bed and a chair?
Oh, sure you'd be fed (unless they forgot)
And since you would never be going outside,
You wouldn't get cold, or too hot.
But oh, you'd be lonely, just sitting alone
With no one to talk to all day.
You'd remember the trees, and the grass and the breeze,
The places where you used to play.
You'd remember your friends, you'd remember the sky,
And games and strawberries and sun,
And you'd know you could never go skating again
Or go swimming, or ride bikes, or run.
You'd get mad and scream, and throw things around;
You'd kick and you'd pound on the wall.
And your owners would scold you, and say to themselves,
"He isn't a nice pet at all."
The more you got mad, the less they would like you,
The less they'd remember to care
About if you had water or if you got fed
Or if you were lonely in there.
And then you would know what it's like to be kept
As a pet when you're meant to be free
And you'd listen when wild things are trying to say
"Please don't make a pet out of me."

Beverly Armstrong