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# Create an Animal



## Overview

Students will apply their knowledge of animal habitats and adaptations as they mimic the tone and style of a field guide while writing the description of a fictional animal.

<b>Subjects</b>	Writing, Science
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General art supplies</li><li>• Writing supplies</li><li>• Overhead projector</li></ul>
<b>Time</b>	Five, 50-minute periods
<b>Preparation</b>	Make an overhead of the field guide description of the Great Horned Owl
<b>Written Assignment: Illustrated Description</b>	

## Objectives

- Students will learn the ways in which animals adapt to fill specific niches within their environments
- Students will focus on audience, tone, and style while writing

## Standards

### Writing:

1–A, B, C, DM EM FM G

2–A, C

3

5–A, B, C, D, E, F, G, J

### Science:

#### Content Standard C: Life Sciences

As a result of their activities in grades 5-8, all students should develop understanding of

- Regulation and behavior
- Populations and ecosystems
- Diversity adaptations of organisms

## Create an Animal (cont.)



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### Standards (cont.)

Content Standard F: Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

As a result of activities in grades 5-8, all students should develop understanding of

- Populations, resources, and environments
- Natural hazards
- Risks and benefits

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### Lesson Opening

Discuss the ways in which animals adapt to meet the demands of their environment, including the following examples:

- Alligator: Has transparent membranes that slide over eyes to protect them from thrashing prey
- Lion: Thick mane protects male lion's neck in fights
- Camel: Fatty hump stores nutrients (energy) for extended trips in arid land (humps do not store water, as is commonly thought)
- Snake: Mouth disjoints to allow swallowing large food
- Giraffe: Neck allows them to reach high into the acacia trees for food
- Monkey: Some have developed tails that allow them to hold onto branches, like a their arm
- Lynx: Large feet allow them to travel quickly on top of the snow

Animals depend on their physical features to keep themselves safe, find food, build homes, attract mates, and withstand severe weather. Discuss how each of the adaptations listed above helps the animal survive. Brainstorm as a class the adaptations that animals use to survive in a range of environments including the following:

- Severe heat (large ears help some desert animals get rid of body heat)
- Severe cold (Polar bears and sea otters have extremely dense fur; whales and other sea mammals grow thick layers of insulating blubber)
- Nocturnal living (large eyes gather all available light; increased non-visual senses allow nocturnal animals to navigate without seeing)
- Frequent drought (some African frogs bury themselves deep in the ground until it rains—sometimes for years—emerging to eat, mate, lay eggs, and die)

Display the field guide description of the Great Horned Owl, noticing the physical features it has developed to fit its environment and hunting strategies. Additional examples of field guide descriptions can be found at [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com).