

Grade 3 Adaptations Task

Prompt: Many animals have adaptations. These help the animal to live and survive. Describe several adaptations animals have and how these help them. Refer to the text.

Crazy Critters

Some animals look really crazy! Their odd looks fit their wild lives perfectly. How do creatures last in the wild? They have adaptations. Adaptations allow an animal to live. Sometimes, adaptations are body parts. Other times, they can be ways of acting. Long ears are adaptations. Big bills and blue feet are too. So are running, jumping, and flying. Most adaptations seem normal. Others look odd. They all allow creatures to live. Now let's meet some animals that look crazy. We will see how their strange looks, or adaptations, help them live.

Surprise, Surprise, Surprise!

The chameleon holds a tongue that stretches longer than the animal's body! A chameleon uses its tongue to catch dinner. The animal likes to eat bugs, birds, and other lizards. It flicks its tongue at prey. It then pulls the prey into its mouth. The prey thought it was a safe distance from the chameleon, but not true!

Crazy Colors

Color helps animals in many ways. Mandrills are monkeys in western Africa. The males have bright red noses. They have blue cheeks. The females like those colors. They pick males with the most colorful faces. This helps the Mandrills survive. If they did not get chosen by females, they would not have babies and so they would die out.

The mandarinfish lives in the Pacific Ocean. It is blue, green, orange, and yellow. The males show off their colors. The colors make a big splash with the females, which helps them survive too.

The zorilla of Africa is mostly black. It has white stripes on its back. Other animals know this animal by color. They see the zorilla's stripes as a warning. Zorillas make an awful smell when they are in trouble. The smell keeps this animal safe.

Staying Safe

Animals have many ways to stay safe. Take the porcupine fish. It drinks when an enemy comes too close. The fish gulps lots of water. It swells into a ball. That makes its sharp spines stick out.

A pangolin also knows how to protect itself. Sharp scales cover its body. They come in handy at times. Whenever an enemy comes by, the pangolin curls into a ball. The enemy can roll the ball, but it cannot eat it.

What caused this adaptation? No one knows for sure. Yet this strange animal does well in the wild. How? Adaptations, of course!

Lizards' Secrets to Survival

"This is a thorny devil," said my friend. He held a lizard. It had spikes on its back. The lizard looked like a tiny dinosaur. My friend put the lizard on the ground. It tried to look scary. Its chest puffed out. Its tail stuck straight up. Yet I knew the truth. The lizard was scared of us. Looking scary is an adaptation. That is a behavior or body part. It lets an animal stay alive. Let's see how adaptations help lizards survive.

Nasty Surprise

Several adaptations help the horned lizard. Its body is flat and brown. That helps it hide in the desert. Spikes and horns cover the lizard. They make it look tough. So a predator may leave it alone. Sometimes a predator comes close anyway. It gets a surprise! The lizard shoots blood from its eyes. Its aim is very good. It can hit an enemy a meter (three feet) away. The blood tastes awful, and the predator soon leaves. The lizard lives another day.

Being Blue

Colorful adaptations help some lizards. Snakes think it is an easy meal. They are wrong. In danger, the lizard sticks out its bright blue tongue. It puffs up its body and hisses. Doing that scares snakes away.

A blue-tailed skink uses its tail to stay safe. The bright blue tail falls off if something yanks it. The lizard then runs to safety. A new tail grows in a year. Losing a body part that way is an adaptation. It's called autotomy.

Rock and Roll

Some lizards do not run away from danger. They just stay put. The chuckwalla lizard does that. It lives in rocky deserts and spends its days sunbathing. When danger is near, the lizard finds a crack in a rock and hides. It puffs its body up, filling the crack. So a predator cannot yank the lizard out.

The armadillo lizard lives in Africa. It does not hide from danger either. Instead, it puts its tail in its mouth. It curls into a tight ball. It looks like a rock with spikes. That way, predators leave it alone.

All these adaptations have helped creatures survive for millions of years!