



## Survival & Adaptations — Year 5 Science

A guide for parents · Australian Curriculum

✓ **You can help!** Australia has some of the most amazing animals on Earth — and your child is learning exactly WHY they look and behave the way they do. This is a great topic to explore outside, at the zoo or wildlife park, or just watching nature documentaries together.

### Why are we learning this? Country is full of adaptations

We live in one of the most incredible places on Earth for watching adaptations. The animals and plants around you — from the crocodile resting still in the water to the kangaroo sheltering in the shade during the heat of the day — are all using special features and behaviours to survive. Many of these adaptations have been understood by First Nations peoples for tens of thousands of years. When your child looks closely at a bird, a lizard or a plant on Country, they are doing real science!

#### WHAT YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING — BY THE END OF YEAR 5 THEY CAN:

- |                                                                    |                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Explain what an adaptation is and why it helps an animal survive | ✓ Describe structural features — the way an animal is built (body parts) |
| ✓ Describe behaviours — what an animal does to survive             | ✓ Match adaptations to the habitat the animal lives in                   |

#### THE BIG IDEAS — WHAT ARE ADAPTATIONS?

##### What is an adaptation?

An adaptation is any feature or behaviour that helps a living thing survive in its environment.

**Think:** every part of an animal has a reason — it was built by nature to help it survive.

##### Structural features

These are physical body parts — things you can see and touch.

**Examples:** sharp claws, thick fur, long legs, camouflage colouring, a pouch, big ears.

##### Behaviours

These are things an animal does to survive — actions and habits.

**Examples:** coming out only at night, migrating, hibernating, burrowing, travelling in groups.

#### AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS AND THEIR ADAPTATIONS

### How living things are built to survive – Australian Animals



## HABITATS — WHERE ANIMALS LIVE AND WHY THEIR FEATURES SUIT IT

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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|  <b>Desert</b><br><b>Animals:</b> Thorny devil, bilby, red kangaroo<br><b>Key features:</b> Water storage, burrows, nocturnal behaviour, camouflage colouring |  <b>Forest &amp; bush</b><br><b>Animals:</b> Kangaroo, wombat, koala, wallaby<br><b>Key features:</b> Camouflage, pouches, strong legs for escape, specialised diet |  <b>Ocean</b><br><b>Animals:</b> Leafy sea dragon, shark, dolphin<br><b>Key features:</b> Camouflage, streamlined body, fins, gills or breathing adaptations |  <b>Nocturnal</b><br><b>Animals:</b> Bilby, tawny frogmouth, sugar glider<br><b>Key features:</b> Very large eyes, huge ears, sensitive whiskers, quiet movement |
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 **Think Like a Scientist! — Spot an adaptation**

Scientists observe carefully and ask questions about what they notice. Try this with your child:

**1. OBSERVE**

Watch an animal — at home, outside, at the zoo or on TV. Look closely at its body.

**2. NOTICE**

What does it have that seems unusual? Big ears? Thick fur? Bright colours? Sharp claws?

**3. WONDER**

"Why does it have that? What does it help the animal do?" — let your child guess!

**4. CONNECT**

"Where does this animal live? How does that feature help it survive there?"

**Great animals to look up:** *thorny devil, platypus, frill-necked lizard, lyrebird, leafy sea dragon, wombat, echidna.*

 **Questions to ask your child** *Tip: encourage them to explain their thinking — there are no wrong guesses!*

- > Why do you think a kangaroo has such big back legs?
- > How does a bilby's huge ears help it survive at night?
- > What is camouflage? Can you think of an animal that uses it?
- > What is the difference between a structural feature and a behaviour?
- > Why do you think some animals only come out at night?
- > If an animal has very thick fur, what kind of habitat does it probably live in?
- > Can you think of a way that a plant might adapt to survive too?

## KEY WORDS

| Word                      | Meaning                                                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Adaptation</b>         | A feature or behaviour that helps a living thing survive in its environment      |
| <b>Structural feature</b> | A physical body part — something you can see (e.g. claws, fur, ears, pouch)      |
| <b>Behaviour</b>          | Something an animal does to survive (e.g. burrowing, migrating, being nocturnal) |
| <b>Habitat</b>            | The natural place where an animal or plant lives (e.g. desert, ocean, forest)    |
| <b>Camouflage</b>         | Colours or patterns that help an animal blend into its surroundings              |
| <b>Predator</b>           | An animal that hunts other animals for food                                      |
| <b>Nocturnal</b>          | Active at night rather than during the day                                       |

**What school will check**

Your child needs to explain how specific body features and behaviours help animals survive in their habitat.

**Science inquiry at home**

Watch a nature documentary together and pause to ask: 'What do you notice about that animal? Why do you think it looks like that?'

**Try it outside!**

Look for a bird, insect or lizard near your home. Ask your child: what features does it have, and how do they help it survive?