



Lesson: White-tailed Deer
How do animals survive in varying environments?
Science
Grades 3-5

Lesson Length: Two 45-minute class periods

**Note: This may vary based on how individual teachers choose to facilitate/structure this lesson.*

Suggested Course Alignment:

**Note: The corresponding video could be used to teach other concepts and ideas.*

- 3.10 (A) explore how structures and functions of plants and animals allow them to survive in a particular environment
- 4.10 (A) explore how structures and functions enable organisms to survive in their environment
- 5.10 (A) compare the structures and functions of different species that help them live and survive in a specific environment such as hooves on prairie animals or webbed feet in aquatic animals

Engage: (Suggested for Day 1)

Have students watch the Texas Farm Bureau “White-tailed Deer” video here:

<https://vimeo.com/447936787>.

- Key words to note will be displayed on the screen.
- While students watch the video, have them complete the *Know/Learn/Ask* chart below. The “Ask” column should include at least two questions that they still have or that developed as they watched the video.

**Note: This could be posted in a discussion board to account for a virtual setting.*

Explore: (Suggested for Day 1)

- Use a Think-Pair-Share activity to facilitate learning

**Note: This activity could be an individual activity to account for a virtual setting.*

- Ask students to:
 - Think: Think/list the characteristics (i.e. coat colors, type of stomach, what they eat, etc.) of white-tailed deer and how those characteristics help the deer survive in their environment. (Remind students to think about what type of habitat was discussed in the video as well as what the environment looked like, what other animals might live in that environment, etc.)



- Pair: Have students pair up to discuss what they each thought about. Students should explain to their partner why they thought about/listed certain characteristics rather than simply just stating, “The deer have orange coats in the summer that serve as camouflage amongst the foliage.”
- Share: After sufficient time is given for the pairs to share, begin a class discussion where each pair shares what they discussed.
 - Select a helper to write common themes from the discussion on the board

Explain: (Suggested for Day 1)

- Display the key words and characteristics from the video where students can see them.
 - Instruct students to spend time determining the definitions by watching the video again and/or by using a dictionary or device.
 - Have students create a flip chart where they write the word (key word or characteristic) on the front of the flap. Under the flap, the student should write the definition along with why and how that characteristic helps deer survive in their habitat (edge habitats). [*The flip chart can be made using sheets of blank printer paper. See example below.](#)

Elaborate: (Suggested for Day 2)

- Students learned what characteristics white-tailed deer have that help them survive in their particular habitat. Now, have students do a quick 15-minute search on a device to learn more about edge habitats and the environments where white-tailed deer live. *(If devices are not available, either directly provide students with the information or utilize a book or article that includes this information.)
- After the quick search, instruct students to critically think about the types of environments deer ARE NOT equipped to survive in (i.e. areas without large amounts of forage, etc.).
- Next, break students into groups of 4-5. Each group should represent a type of environment. Once separated into groups, have students discuss what they found during their search. The group should create a list of reasons why or why not deer are equipped to live in the environment that the group is labeled. [*This activity should teach students how structures and characteristics equip animals to live in one or more environments.](#)

Evaluate: (Suggested for Day 2)

- Exit Task: Have students reflect on their *Know/Learn/Ask Chart* from the beginning of the lesson. Then, have students circle (in colored pencil) at least one question in the



“Ask” column that was answered (if the question wasn’t fully answered, challenge the student to think if more information was given) throughout the lesson.

- Pass out notecards (the number will correspond with the number of questions the student circled in the “Ask” column).
 - Students should then write the question from the “Ask” column that they circled on one side and the answer on the other side. Once the student has done this for each item they circled on the chart, have students staple their notecards to their chart and turn in. **Encourage students to be creative with this activity. For example, they might choose to draw pictures to describe what they learned or to elaborate on what they write on the card.*
 - If a student wrote down a question in the “Ask” column that was not answered during the lesson, have the student write on the notecard/s something they learned throughout the lesson. For example, a word or concept could be written on the front of the notecard and the definition or description of the concepts on the back. **The idea of this exit task is to help the student and the teacher see what was learned and how the student developed understanding throughout the lesson.*



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Know/Learn/Ask Chart

KNOW	LEARN	ASK



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Example: Flip Chart

