

Title: Critters in Your Own Backyard

Subject: Science

Grade: 3rd-5th

Time: 2 90-minute periods

Objective: Students will understand that many animals, or related animals, found in their own backyard also make their home in the rainforest.

Illinois State Standards and Objectives

12.A.2a Describe simple life cycles of plants and animals and the similarities and differences in their offspring.

12.A.2b Categorize features as either inherited or learned.

12.B.2a Describe relationships among various organisms in their environments. (e.g. predator/prey, parasite/host, food chains, and food webs.

12.B.2b Identify physical features of plants and animals that help them live in different environments.

12.B.3a Identify and classify biotic and abiotic factors in an environment that affect population density, habitat and placement of organisms in an energy pyramid.

12.B.3b Compare and assess features of organisms for their adaptive, competitive, and survival potential

Method:

Begin the lesson by asking students to list animals that are commonly seen around their backyards. There are more animals living in your area than you generally think!

Have students choose one of the animals found in your area and research a relative of the animal who lives in the rainforest. Below is list of common mammals and birds that can be compared. There are also loads of common insects.

North America	Tropical Rainforest
Raccoon	Cotamundi
Turkey Vulture	King Vulture
Mountain Lion	Puma
River Otter	Southern River Otter
Heron	Anhinga
White Egret	Cattle Egret
Bald Eagle	Harpy Eagle
Great Grey Owl	Spectacled Owl
Broad-Winged Hawk	Roadside Hawk
Scarlet Tanager	Blue-Grey Tanager
Little Brown Bat	Vampire Bat
White-Tailed Deer	Red Brocket Deer

Critters of Your Backyard

Many animals that live in your backyard have relatives living in the Amazon rainforest. Your job is to investigate the similarities between the two animals. You must also recognize the aspects that make the animals different from one another.

Answer the questions below after researching both of your animals.

1. The animals I chose to research in my backyard is: _____

2. Before I started researching this animal I knew:

3. An animal that is similar in the Amazon is: _____

4. I want to learn this about the animal in the Amazon.

5. The scientific name for the animal in my backyard is

6. The scientific name for the Amazon animal is

7. Both of these animals eat:

8. These animals have this in common (list three traits)

9. Something that makes these animals different is:
