

Social Studies- 6th Grade

Introduction to Birds

Birds have many adaptations that allow them to live in nearly all corners of the earth. For example, penguins have specialized feathers and streamlined bodies to help them survive the freezing temperatures near the South Pole and to be able to swim quickly and efficiently to both catch prey and avoid predators. Roadrunners such as Cholla, the Greater Roadrunner seen in ***It's All About Birds!***, are specially adapted to living in arid climates in the desert southwestern portions of the United States and Mexico. Roadrunners will reduce their activity by 50% during the middle of the day when it is hottest, and they are able to reabsorb water from their feces before excretion.

Birds are not the only species on Earth that can live in extreme environments. Other animals, and even plants, also have specifically adapted traits that help them to survive in their given habitats. These traits include anything from what and how they eat to physical adaptations allowing them to survive in a given climate to behavioral characteristics enabling them to escape from predators.

Grade 6

Standard 1: The student will develop and practice the process skills of social studies

1.2 – Identify, evaluate, and draw conclusions from different kinds of maps, graphs, charts, diagrams, timelines, and other representations such as photographs and satellite-produced images or computer-based technologies.

1.3 – Interpret information from a broad selection of research materials such as encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, atlases, and cartoons.

Standard 2: The student will use geographic representations to draw conclusions.

2.1 – Apply the concepts of scale, orientation, latitude and longitude, and physical regions.

2.2 – Compare political, physical, and thematic maps.

2.3 – Define, recognize, and locate basic landforms and bodies of water on appropriate maps and globes.

Activity:

Objective: To demonstrate basic skills of social studies and how they can relate to different subjects.

Materials: Encyclopedias

Field guides or reliable information websites (birds, reptiles/amphibians, mammals, plants)

Geographical maps of the world (or regional maps)

Blank maps of the world (or regional maps)

Map pencils

Paper

Pencils

Procedure:

1. After students have a grasp of how to read geographical maps and are familiar with the different geographical and climate regions of the world, each student should pick a specific region of the world to study (Sahara, Rockies, Great Plains, etc...).
2. Hand out a blank political map of the world or of his/her selected region to each student.
3. Each student should outline and color the chosen geographical region on their map using map pencils (Example: If a student chose the Rocky Mountains, he/she should color that mountain range on a map of North America).
4. After completing the geographical map, have students research what types of plants and animals live in their chosen region/climate, and have them make note of 5 organisms that are specifically adapted to living there (Example: Roadrunners and cacti in the desert).
5. Students should learn what adaptations (behavioral or physical) the 5 organisms have developed that help them to survive the conditions in their distribution range.
6. Have students then use different colored map pencils and patterns (dots, lines, dashes, etc...) to draw each organism's distribution range on the map that they previously created.