

BE THE CHANGE

Grade: 4		Topic: Survival and Development	
Curriculum Area: Science: Habitats		Title: What Do I Need to Survive and Thrive?	
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U.N. Rights of the Child Article(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poor countries achieve this. (article 24) Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. (article 29) 		Teaching Strategies	
Information Studies: Overall Expectations Inquiry and Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore information in a variety of group activities locate a variety of appropriate resources from a variety of sources sort information using a variety of organizers synthesize findings and formulate conclusions 		Session 1 Read <i>The Water Hole</i> . Encourage observations e.g. variety of animals, diminishing water source. Introduce the concept that all living things need the four key elements of habitat to survive and thrive – food, water, shelter and space. <i>Habitat Lap Sit</i> Students number off 1 through 4. Each group goes to a different corner of the room, leaving a cleared space in the middle. This activity works well outdoors. Assign each group one component of habitat. 1s = food, 2s = water, 3s = shelter, 4s = space. Students will now create a circle, as directed. One student from each of the four corners walks towards the cleared centre, and begins to form a circle, facing in. Continue to add students in sets of 4 until all students are in the circle, shoulder to shoulder, facing inwards. Now ask all students to turn to the right, and take one step closer into the circle. Then students place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, and on the count of 3, to <i>sit down</i> on the knees of the person behind them, keeping their own knees together to support the person in front of them. Miraculously, it works. Say, "Food, water, shelter and space, in the appropriate arrangement, are what is needed to have a suitable habitat." It sounds complex, but it is a powerful way to demonstrate an important concept. Now explain to the students that there has been a drought in the land, just as described in <i>The Water Hole</i> . Ask some or all of the people representing water to leave the circle. What happens? What happens to real animals in a real habitat when there is little or no water? You could repeat the process for other elements of habitat.	
Information Technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> browse bookmarked websites to meet specific information needs For specific grade-level expectations, refer to <i>Information Studies: Kindergarten to Grade 12</i> (OSLA 1999).		Session 2 Collect a wide range of library books for students to browse through. You will also need some age-appropriate atlases and a world map. Tell students that they are preparing for a short research project by identifying a large range of animals from around the world. Invite them to browse through the books, and find animals that interest them. Then ask them to read the text to find where that animal lives. Now they use an atlas to locate that country, and then place the animal in its habitat using a post-it note. Endangered animals are recorded on a special coloured post-it note. Encourage students to find animals from all continents, both endangered and not. At the end of this session, gather as a large group, and reflect on what you see on the map. Invite questions, comments, and observations. This is a great opportunity for broad thinking and making connections. Now add humans to the map, in a different shaped post-it. Continue the thinking/reflecting process. <p style="text-align: right;">Continued on next page</p>	
Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Water Hole</i> <i>The Future of the Earth</i> <i>If the World Were a Village</i> 			
Websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Wildlife Federation Canada Nature Conservancy Canada Toronto Zoo Link to Learning KidsClick 			
World map			
Black Line Master <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat 			
BE THE CHANGE... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a class, decide on one action you could take to help Examples : adopt a zoo animal, adopt a wild animal, purchase an acre of Canadian wildlife through the Nature Conservancy to protect it from development, raise money to help feed children in a country in Africa Raise a set amount of money to achieve that goal through a simple campaign (e.g. bake sale, move-a-thon) Share your success via a school assembly, the school newsletter, or the daily announcements 			

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Teaching Strategies

Session 3 - 5

Using your collection of library books, as well as selected websites ([Link to Learning](#), which posts links related to all Ontario curriculum, is a good starting point). See also [KidsClick](#).

Use the [habitat black line master](#) to structure a mini-research project on one animal pre-selected to represent a variety of habitats, some endangered, some threatened, some not. The emphasis here is not on gathering a large amount of research on a particular animal. Rather, it is to look at a specific animal in its habitat and to observe how its basic needs are being met, or not, as well as the interrelationships of living things. Students will collect the information, and then produce a research card (could be the size of a large index card) to share what they have found. These cards can be evaluated individually according to clarity, completeness, and presentation of information.

Session 6

Students share their information in a card trading session, in which they share the information on their cards with 3 different classmates. You could end this session with a “world wide web” of a different kind. Students sit in a circle, with their trading card in front of them. Each person names their animal. You hold a ball of coloured yarn in your hand, and invite students to consider connections between their animals. E.g. frogs and snakes need the same kind of habitat, snakes eat field mice, the African elephant and a zebra both live in a grasslands. Each time a student identifies a connection, s/he passes the yarn. At the end, the yarn should have crisscrossed the circle many times, and should look like an intricately inter-connected web, just like life on earth. This is a powerful visual display of a key scientific concept, that diversity is the key to a healthy environment.

Session 7

Now it is time to encourage your students into thinking about actions they can take. Divide your class into 3 groups. One class will be with you. Show them the end papers of *The Future of the Earth*, which show water distribution in the world. Compare with the back end papers which show population distribution. Another group will visit [Ecological Footprint Quiz](#) to determine what their individual ecological footprint is. Early finishers could also visit the website companion to [If the World Were a Village](#). A final group (ideally with an assigned reader) will browse through *If the World Were a Village*, to gain more information on the availability of resources worldwide. Groups will cycle through all 3 activities. The purpose of this session is to demonstrate that although all living things need food, water, shelter and space, their needs (including humans’) are not universally met. Once each group has had the chance to do each activity, gather together once more. Pose this question: We know what living beings, including human beings, need to survive and thrive. Are their needs met? Share some of the information you’ve gained today. How can we help? Discern an area that has captured the interest of the students in your class. Follow their lead. See the *Be the Change* box on page one for a template for an action plan. Actions need not be big, bold, time-consuming initiatives. The emphasis is on doing something, rather than doing nothing, or, as Mahatma Gandhi so eloquently put it, “Be the change that you want to see in this world.”

Be the change.