

# Life Science Stories

## Mountains

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Earth has a lot of mountains. Mountains cover about one fourth of all land. Mountains come in many sizes. Mountains are made of rocks.

Mountain or Alpine habitats change the higher up you climb. At the bottom of mountains you might have grasslands and forests. As you move up the mountains, the plants and animals slowly disappear. Animals like mountain goats, birds, and snow leopards make their homes in the trees and grasses of mountains. High up, the trees do not grow any more.

Many of the tallest mountains have ice or snow on top of them for part or all of the year. This snow and ice melts in hotter parts of the year. The water runs downhill to rivers and lakes.



# Life Science Stories



## Reptiles

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Reptiles are a kind of animal. Reptiles usually live in warm places, but some live in the water. Snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and alligators are some common reptiles.



Reptiles are vertebrates, so they have backbones. Reptiles have scales. Some also have shells. Most reptiles lay eggs. A few kinds of snakes and lizards have live young that don't come from eggs. Most reptiles are meat-eaters. A few kinds of lizards and tortoises are plant-eaters.



Reptiles are cold-blooded. They like the sun, because it keeps them warm. If they get too cold, they could die. Some reptiles just hibernate and go to sleep when it is cold. They wake up when it gets warm again!

# Life Science Stories



## Mammals

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Mammals are a kind of animal. Mammals can be found all over the world, on land or in the sea. Dogs, cats, cows, monkeys, and whales are common mammals. People are mammals, too!



Mammals are vertebrates, so they have backbones. They are the only kind of animal with fur or hair, except for some insects. Most mammals have four legs and a tail. Some mammals have two arms and two legs. Marine mammals that live in water, like whales or dolphins, have fins and a tail.

Mammals all feed their babies milk. Other types of animals, like fish or reptiles, can't make milk. Mammals are warm-blooded, just like birds. This means their bodies can make their own heat from food they eat.



# Life Science Stories

## Grasslands

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Earth has lots of grasslands. Grasslands usually have very few trees. Grasslands can have lots of animals. Many of them like to eat grass.



A savanna is a warm or tropical grassland area. The grasses can be very tall. This is good for animals to hide in. Many animals eat the grass, too. Animals like elephants, zebras, and lions might live in a savanna.



Temperate grasslands, like prairies and steppes, might seem like large grassy fields, but the grasses get much taller. The animals that live in a grassland must use the grass. They eat the grass, hide in the grass, and make their homes in the grass. Buffalo, wolves, owls, and bugs might live in a grassland.



# Life Science Stories

## Forests

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Earth has many kinds of forests. These habitats are filled with different kinds of trees! These trees give animals food, shelter, and oxygen.

Near the North and South Poles, forests are almost all pine trees. These are cold for most of the year. There are some big animals, like snow leopards or caribou, but not too many.

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Many forests have leafy trees. These might be more familiar to us. They are filled with oak, maple, and other hardwood trees. Animals like squirrels, wolves, bears, and owls might live in these forests.



There are also rain forests and jungles. These are very humid places. It rains so much in these forests. There might be parrots, monkeys, gorillas, and tigers living in these rainy forests.

# Life Science Stories

## Crustaceans

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Crustaceans are a kind of animal. Crustaceans are usually found by the water. There are some crustaceans that live on land also, like pill bugs and some hermit crabs. Crabs, shrimp, crayfish, and lobsters are some common crustaceans.

Crustaceans are invertebrates, so they do NOT have backbones. Instead, they have shells. That makes them very different from most other animals.

Crustaceans often have a lot of legs. Lobsters, shrimp, and crabs all have ten legs! If they lose a claw or a leg, they can grow it back!



# Life Science Stories

## Classifying

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Classifying is a way of sorting things. When you sort things by how they look, you are classifying. You are also classifying if you sort things into groups that are similar. You can classify anything.

If we classify animals, we might sort them many ways. We can sort by how many legs they have. We can sort by size, shape, and color. We can sort them by if they have fur, scales, or feathers. We can sort by what kind of place they call home. There are so many ways to classify animals!



If we classify plants, we can sort them many ways, too. We can sort them by their sizes, shapes, and colors. We can sort by if they make flowers or fruits. We can sort by where they are found or what kinds of leaves they have. There are many ways to classify plants!

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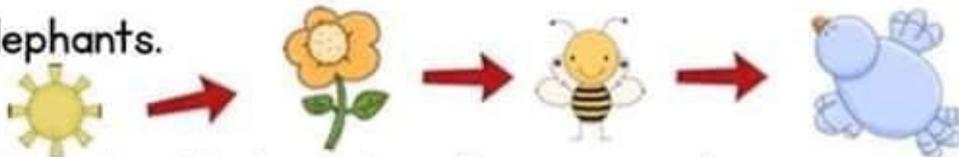
## Food Chains

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Food Chains show how energy moves. When something eats something else, energy moves. We need food energy to play and learn. How do plants and animals get their energy?



All food chains start with the sun. The sun feeds plants. Plants make their own food using the sun, water, and soil. Animals that eat plants are called herbivores. They get their energy from the plants. Herbivores are animals like cows, grasshoppers, and elephants.



Animals that eat other animals are called carnivores. They get their energy from the animals they eat. Carnivores are animals like tigers, owls, sharks, and dragonflies. Some animals eat plants and animals. They are called omnivores. Are you an omnivores?

# Life Science Stories



## Insects

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Insects are a kind of animal. Insects are also known as bugs. Insects can be found all over the world. Crickets, ants, grasshoppers, butterflies, ladybugs, and bees are some common insects.

Insects are invertebrates, so they do not have backbones. They have exoskeletons. This means they have their bones on the outside, like a shell. That makes them similar to crustaceans. Some insects, like butterflies, can change as they grow.



Insects always have six legs. If something has eight legs, like a spider, it is not an insect. Insects usually have three body segments. The head is where the eyes, mouth, and brains are. The thorax is where the legs and wings connect. The abdomen is where the guts and organs are.

# Life Science Stories



## Wetlands

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Earth has some very damp habitats. Wetlands are very important areas for animals and plants. Wetlands are also important for people and lands!

Wetlands are swamps, bogs, and marshes. Unlike lakes and rivers, there aren't waves. The water sits still. Wetlands are humid places full of animals and plants. Some of these plants and animals find their ways into rivers, lakes, and seas. Wetlands help clean the water. They also help prevent flooding.



Wetlands are full of life. They have many trees and grasses. Many alligators, turtles, snakes, birds, frogs, bugs, and fish make homes in wetlands. There are more types of animals in wetlands than in any other type of habitat!



# Life Science Stories

## Life Cycles

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Plants and animals don't always look the same. They go through different stages as they grow. These stages are called a life cycle.



Some animals have a metamorphosis. This is a change that makes them like a different thing! A butterfly starts as an egg and hatches as a caterpillar. Then it goes into a chrysalis, a cocoon, and hatches as a butterfly. It sure does change!



Frogs change a lot, also. They go from an egg to a tadpole to an adult. Tadpoles don't look that much like frogs, do they?



Plants don't usually change as much as animals, but they change, too. Plants start as a seed and start to grow roots. Later, they flower or make fruit. Then they make more plants.

# Life Science Stories



## Plants

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Plants are a very important kind of life. Plants cover most land. They can be big or small and come in many colors, but they are not animals. Trees, flowers, grasses, and bushes are common plants.

How are animals and plants different? Plants usually can't move. Plants breathe a different kind of air than people and animals do. Plants make their own food from water, sunlight, and the soil. Plants can't talk. Plants don't think. Plants usually make more plants, or reproduce, with seeds.

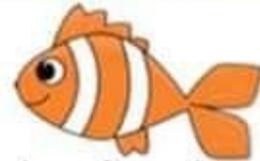


How are animals and plants the same? They both have body parts that do jobs. Animals eat food, but Plants 'eat' sunlight with their leaves and 'drink' with their roots. Animals grow from babies to adults, and plants grow from seeds to adults.

# Life Science Stories

## Fish

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Fish are a kind of animal. Fish can be found in rivers, lakes, swamps, seas, and oceans. Fish always need water to live. Perch, sunfish, bluegill, salmon, trout, and tuna are some common fish.

Fish are vertebrates, so they have backbones. They have scales, just like reptiles. Like reptiles and amphibians, fish are cold-blooded. They get warm or cold depending on how hot or cold the water around them is.



Fish have special body parts to help them live in water. Fish have gills to breathe air from the water. They do not have hands and feet. Instead, they have lots of fins to help them swim. Many fish also have swim bladders so they do not sink.



# Life Science Stories

## Arctic & Tundra

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Earth has a few very cold habitats. It is very hard for plants and animals to live in these areas.



The Arctic and Antarctic areas are at the top and bottom of our world. These areas are called the North and South Poles. They are covered with ice and snow, but it doesn't rain or snow very often. It does not get warm enough to melt all of the ice. Very few plants or animals can live here.

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Tundra and Taiga are near the poles. Snow and ice melts for a month or two. Some plants and trees might grow here during those warmer months. Animals that live here have to adapt to live here. They might have extra fat to keep them warm. They might migrate or move when it gets too cold. It is a hard life in these areas.



# Life Science Stories

## Birds

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Birds are a kind of animal. Birds can be found all over the world. Sparrows, doves, cardinals, owls, eagles, hawks, chickens, and hummingbirds are some common birds.



Birds are vertebrates, so they have backbones. They are the only kind of animal with feathers. Birds lay eggs. Usually they have a nest for the eggs. Birds have two feet and special arms. They don't have hands or fingers. They have flippers or wings.



Most birds can fly. Birds have feathers, wings, and very light bones to help them fly. They can't be too heavy! Only a few birds, like ostriches or penguins, can't fly.



# Life Science Stories



## Deserts

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Earth has a lot of deserts. Deserts make up about one third of all land! There are deserts on all 7 continents. These places can be cold or hot, but they are always dry.



Hot deserts are sandy places, like the Sahara Desert in Africa. Some deserts don't get any rain for a whole year! Others get less than 10 inches per year. When it does rain, special desert plants drink the water up quickly. There can even be flowers. Animals have adapted to life in an area with very little water.



Usually, we think of deserts as sandy, hot places. There are cold deserts, too. Some cold deserts are high in the mountains. Others are near the ocean. The two largest deserts in the world are the north and south poles, and they are very cold!

# Life Science Stories



## Living & Nonliving

Story by Andrew Frinkle

Earth is filled with many kinds of things. Some of them are living. Some of them are not living, or nonliving. How can you tell the difference?



Here are some things that living things do:

- 1 - Living things grow. We get taller as we grow up.
- 2 - Living things react. If there is a bright light, you close your eyes.
- 3 - Living things use energy. People eat food for energy.
- 4 - Living things reproduce. Flowers make seeds to make more flowers.
- 5 - Living things are organized. We have cells and organs, like hearts and lungs.
- 6 - Living things adapt. We learn and change.



That is why things like rocks or air are nonliving. They can't do things that plants and animals do.

# Life Science Stories

## Funguses

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Funguses are important living things. Funguses are not plants or animals. They are kind of in-between. Common funguses include molds, mushrooms, and toadstools.

Funguses are like plants for a few reasons. They don't walk or move. They have something like roots, called mycelium. Some funguses look like vegetables, too. You can eat some funguses, like mushrooms, but many of them can make you sick.

Funguses are like animals because they eat or consume their food. They usually live on dead things. They 'eat' dead plants or animals. They are nature's recyclers. They do not make their own food from sunlight like plants do. In fact, some mushrooms even grow in the dark.



# Life Science Stories

## Lakes & Seas

Story by Andrew Frinkle



Earth is mostly covered by water. Water covers about 70% of our world. Many plants and animals live in the water.



Lakes are small bodies of fresh water on land. They are freshwater. They fill in with river water, rain, springs, or runoff water that comes down hills and mountains. Water in lakes gets to the sea by rivers. In the sea it mixes with saltwater. In freshwater you might find trout, frogs, perch, carp, and seaweed.



Seas and oceans are large bodies of water. They are saltwater. Different kinds of animals and plants live in saltwater and freshwater. Seas can also be very deep, sometimes miles deep! You can find whales, sharks, dolphins, stingrays, jellyfish, lobsters, and seaweed in saltwater.