

How Do Animals Adapt?

Activity: Grades 3-5

Students are introduced to adaptations—changes in body parts or behaviors—that helped dinosaurs survive.



Directions:

1. Explain. Introduce the term “adaptation” to the students. An adaptation is a behavior or body part modification (change) that helps an animal survive where it lives. Explain that adaptations can occur through modified behavior (example: working in groups, roaming in packs to avoid predators or hunt prey) or modified body parts (example: chemical defense, camouflage, different limb shapes).

Ask students to brainstorm other examples.

Possible answers: *modified body parts such as eyes (ability to see at night, ability to see far away), keen sense of smell, large teeth, many teeth, claws, body size; modified behaviors such as playing dead, food selection, migration.*

2. Discussion. Tell students that, like modern day animals, prehistoric animals also adapted body parts and behaviors in order to survive.

3. Continue Discussion. Describe some of the challenges that dinosaurs might have faced.

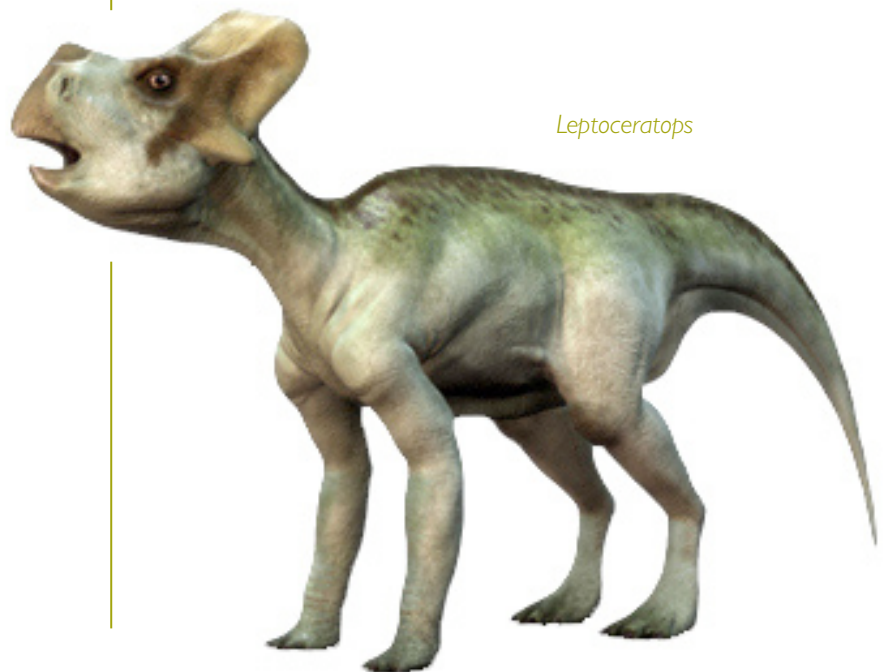
Possible answers: *protecting their young, defending themselves, finding food.*

4. Distribute the Animal Adaptations handout to each student. As a class, review the model of the giraffe. Next, have students participate in a guided classroom discussion or do library or online research to complete the rest of the handout.

Suggested Online Resources:

➤ National Geographic: Animals—Prehistoric

5. Discussion. Ask students to discuss what they learned about adaptations in modern and prehistoric animals.






Leptoceratops

Animal Adaptations

Use Internet or library research to complete the chart below. Use the giraffe as a model.

Animal	Animal Classification	Where it Lives	What it Eats	Body Part Adaptations	Behavior Adaptations	How Adaptations Help the Animal Survive
MODERN ANIMAL						
 GIRAFFE	Mammal	Grasslands of Africa	Leaves from shrubs and trees	Long neck, long tongue, good eyesight	Live in herds	Height and long tongue help it reach food; living in herds provides protection

PREHISTORIC ANIMALS

 LEPTOCERATOPS						
 ANKYLOSAURUS						
 THESCÉLOSAURUS						