

WAYFINDER Comparing Animals

The following North Carolina State Science Standards are relevant to this Wayfinder:

Grade K	1.01, 1.02, 1.03, 1.05
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Introduction

Children are naturally drawn to animals. Animals pique human curiosity and help us learn more about our world and ourselves. Building an understanding of what makes animals unique and similar is the first step in appreciating the diversity of life on Earth. From there, we can begin to understand the important roles that animals play in the world and learn how to care for and protect all living things.

The Museum houses various animals that children can observe and learn from. *Carolina Wildlife*, on the first floor of the main building, offers a peek at animals native to North Carolina including alligators, owls and a woodchuck. Before watching the butterflies visit their flowers in the *Magic Wings* Butterfly House, explore the *Bayer CropScience Insectarium* to catch a glimpse of invertebrates from around the world. Finish your visit with a trek down to *Explore the Wild* and watch black bears, red wolves and two lemur species interact with their environment.

Before your visit

Practice observing animals with your students. Compare and contrast:

- body type/plan
- growth and change
- movement
- basic survival needs

Cut out pictures of various animals and have students sort them into their own categories. Challenge them to come up with several ways to categorize the pictures, keeping in mind the four ideas above.

If you own a classroom animal and are not already doing so, discuss with your students what your animal needs to live. How is this similar or different to what humans need to live? Assign duties to students that involve taking care of your pet.

During your visit

Visit the owls and then the alligators in *Carolina Wildlife*. Ask the following questions:

- 1) What is covering this animal's body?
- 2) How does this animal move from one place to another?
- 3) What do you think this animal eats? *Owls are birds of prey. They eat small rodents like mice and voles. They may also eat small birds and lizards. Alligators also eat meat, usually in the form of water animals like fish, frogs, snakes and small mammals.*
- 5) How was this animal born?
- 6) Name three things that make this animal like a human. Name three things that make it different.

Take a peek at the box turtle and ask the following questions:

- 1) Why is there a box in the cage with the turtle? *Many animals, including turtles prefer not to be out in the open. The box provides a nice hiding place for our turtle. In the wild, turtles would probably find a hiding place under leaves or in fallen trees.*
- 2) Why would a turtle want to hide in the wild?
- 3) What might a turtle do if something he saw frightened him?
- 4) What else do you see in his cage that helps him live?
- 5) Can you think of another animal that has a shell on its back? Does that animal move around the same way? *Students may be most familiar with snails. They do not have legs, but instead move around by pushing themselves along a trail of slime with their foot.*

Take time to observe the opossum, muskrat or woodchuck (one may be more active than the others and would be better to observe).

- 1) What is in their enclosure that helps the animal grow? *Food and water are available, but exercise is also helpful! Can students find anything that can be used for exercise?*
- 2) What is the animal doing?
- 3) Do you do this activity, too? When?
- 4) Do you think you do this activity more than the animal? Why/why not?

Take a walk up to the *Magic Wings Butterfly House*. Give students a chance to look around and then ask them to stand in one place and try to watch just one or two butterflies for a short time.

- 1) What are the butterflies doing? If they are resting, what are they resting on?
- 2) If a butterfly is resting and then flies, what makes it fly away? *There are many reasons for a butterfly to move from one place to another. Most often it is because it is done feeding at one flower and will move to another. Another reason for moving would be that it is startled and trying to escape danger.*
- 3) Do you see butterflies landing on people? If so, on what part of the body do they land? Why might the butterfly have landed there? *Butterflies are attracted to bright colors and strong scents. What about this person may have attracted the insect?*
- 4) What does a butterfly need to grow and survive? Do humans need the same thing?
- 5) How does the butterfly get from place to place? Do humans do this? *Our bodies don't fly, but do we take advantage of flight to get around?*

After your visit

Listen to your students tell you their favorite animal from the Museum. Pick one or two and ask these questions:

- 1) Do you know what this animal eats? Would you want to share a meal with this animal? Why or why not?
- 2) When you were at the Museum, what was your animal doing? Would you have fun doing that same thing with your animal friend?
- 3) What are some things that make you very different from your favorite animal?