

# Habitat Hold-Up

**Subject:** Science

**Duration:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Location:** Classroom / Outdoors

**Key Vocabulary:** Habitat, hardwood hammock, pineland, sawgrass prairie, cypress slough, food chain, omnivore, herbivore, carnivore, predator, prey

**Related Activities:** Habitat Hunt; The Ecological Symphony; Create A Food Chain; Risky Business; and many others

**Florida Sunshine State Standards:** SC.4.L.17, SC.5.L.17, SC.6.L.14



## Materials

- South Florida animal and plant cards (one made by each student) from the black and white animal outlines found in the “Supplementary Materials” section.

**Objectives:** After completing this activity, the students will be able to: a) identify various habitats of South Florida, b) name a food chain within each habitat, and c) identify two herbivores and two carnivores that live here.

**Method:** By taking on the role of a South Florida plant or animal, the students will become more familiar with the organisms and their role in the ecosystem.

**Background:** Each habitat in South Florida contains a unique collection of plants and animals. This creates a series of delicate food chains in which each organism plays a critical role.

## Suggested Procedure

1. Assign a different plant or animal to each student, and give them each a sign or picture of their organism. You could have the students color photocopies of the black and white animal outlines (pp. 197-214).
2. Have them observe and study the organism to determine which habitat it lives in and its role within that habitat.
3. The students can sit in a circle or at their desks if indoors.
4. Begin to ask the students questions and when the question applies to them, they stand up. For example, if you asked, “Who lives in a hardwood hammock?” The tree snail, gumbo limbo tree, snake, raccoon, lysiloma (wild tamarind) tree, etc... would stand up.
5. Continue to ask various questions which describe or indicate characteristics of the plant or animal. (See sample list of questions.) Be creative with different slants of questioning or points to focus on.
6. When all organisms in a habitat are standing, have the students make a food chain among themselves.

Sample Questions:

- Who lives in a hardwood hammock? Pineland? Sawgrass prairie? Cypress slough?

- Who is a carnivore? Herbivore? Omnivore? Nocturnal? Predator? Prey?
- Who has an organism that depends almost exclusively on you for survival?
- Who is an endangered species?
- Who lives in freshwater? Saltwater?
- Who is “cold-blooded”? “Warm-blooded”?
- Who uses alligator holes in the dry season?
- Who uses sunlight directly?

## Evaluation

Group students into their habitats and have them explain (and possibly research) why they are important in South Florida.



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