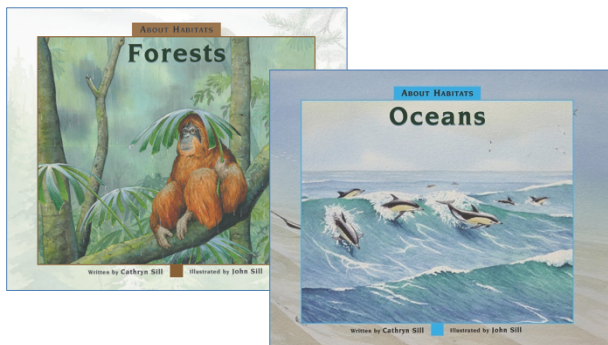


# TEACHER'S GUIDE



## About Habitats series

Written by Cathryn Sill | Illustrated by John Sill

Ages 3–8 | Informational  
Lexile • F&P • GRL

### ABOUT THE SERIES

The *About Habitats* series introduces children to specific habitats and their living and nonliving components. Each book in the series provides information about the nature and characteristics of the habitat while the full-page illustrations expand on that information. The books stand alone or work together as a series. The *About Habitats* Teacher's Guide can be used for a single book or the series.

### BOOKS IN THE ABOUT HABITATS SERIES

For a list of ISBNs and formats available, see pages 4–5 of this guide.

*About Habitats: Deserts*

*About Habitats: Forests*

*About Habitats: Grasslands*

*About Habitats: Mountains*

*About Habitats: Oceans*

*About Habitats: Polar Regions*

*About Habitats: Seashores*

*About Habitats: Wetlands*

### THEMES

- Biomes (Habitats)
- Adaptations
- Animals
- Ecosystems
- Populations in ecosystems
- Organisms and the environment
- Environment
- Food chain
- Plants
- Diversity
- Climate

### BEFORE YOU READ

- Discuss the meaning of **habitat**. Draw a two column chart on the board. Ask the students to suggest words

that describe their habitat (inside their home) and write them in the first column. Direct them to think about what's outside their home and suggest words. Write those in the second column.

- Explain that everything has a habitat. Review the words from the chart and tell them these words describe their habitat. Define **environment** and relate habitat as a part of their environment. Expand that definition to include **ecosystem**, a community of living things and their environment. Then show one or several of the *About Habitats* books. Ask them to describe the habitats they see on the covers and discuss what they see.
- Tell them certain environments have specific kinds of animals and plants that live well there. These large areas of land with similar land forms, temperature, rainfall, and soil and the plant and animal life in them are called **biomes**. Write biome on the board.
- Tell them to look for the things that make this biome special as you read the book.

### AS YOU READ

- Read the book to the class once without stopping to create and hold the students' interest and to promote a love of reading.
- Show the pictures as you read.
- Have students raise their hand every time they hear a word they do not understand. Write each word on chart paper or on the board and use this student-generated vocabulary list for further study.
- Read the book a second time, stopping to allow students to point out parts of the story that interested them or raised questions in their minds.

## AFTER YOU READ

- Ask the students to name the animals they remember from the book. List them on a chart on the board so everyone can read the words.
- Review the book and notice the characteristics of this biome. Point out the information from the book about the biome.
- Discuss and answer the following questions. Any questions that cannot be answered during the discussion can be written down on chart paper and used later as part of the learning activities in this guide.

## General Discussion Questions

1. Why might certain animals live better in this habitat?
2. Describe the climate in this habitat.
3. What are some things animals do to avoid being eaten?
4. Why do animals need plants?
5. What might happen if a habitat didn't get enough water?
6. Describe what a fire could do to the habitat.
7. What do living things need to live well in their habitat?
8. What is the difference between a plant and an animal?
9. If you could choose a habitat to live in, which one would you choose? Explain why.
10. Why is it important to have many different habitats in the world?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### LANGUAGE ARTS

- Ask students to create a habitat poem. Choose a habitat and write the habitat name going down the page. Write an acrostic poem as a group to describe the habitat. Take turns reading the poem.
- Have students create a habitat chart for the selected habitat. Have them divide a page into four sections and include: the habitat name in one square, an animal in another, one fact about the habitat in the third, and in the fourth square a drawing of the habitat or words that describe the habitat.
- Make a list of the animals and write them down. Have the students name the color(s) of each animal and write them next to the animal's name.
- Use a picture dictionary to look up the name of the habitat from the book you are reading. Put the definition on the board. Give each student a sentence

strip and have him or her write the meaning to post on his or her desk.

- Put students in small groups of three and allow them to choose a habitat to discuss. Have each group create 1-10 questions about the habitat of their choice and answer all questions. Afterwards, collect all questions, and have students stay in their groups. Then, using the generated questions, play Trivial Pursuit with the class. On the board, write the name of each habitat. The first group to answer two or more questions correctly wins in that category. The group with the most wins is the winner of the game.

## VOCABULARY

Have students use the Vocabulary Word-Study Sheet Handout or have them create the chart on notebook paper to learn these new words.

- **Biome:** large areas of land with similar land forms, temperature, rainfall, and soil and the plant and animal life in them.
- **Ecosystem:** a community of living things and their environment.
- **Environment:** the surroundings.
- **Habitat:** the place where plants and animals live.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

- Look up a country that holds the biome about which you read. Select a companion book about that country or its people's culture. Look for ways the people and animals in that region live within that particular habitat. Discuss why the people and animals might live there and what they do to fit into that environment.
- After reading several of the *About Habitats* books, make a chart with the biome names. Discuss what weather each habitat has and draw pictures to show the weather in the appropriate column.

## GEOGRAPHY

- Use the National Geographic biome map to locate the United States. Show the students the map key and how to read it. Identify the biomes that are in the United States. Read the appropriate *About Habitat* books to learn about those biomes. For more information, visit [www.worldbiomes.com/biomes\\_map.htm](http://www.worldbiomes.com/biomes_map.htm)
- Use a world map and have students name each continent. Next use the front matter in the books as a guide to practice reading the continents. Discuss the places where the biome you are discussing occurs.

## MATH

- Model how to write an animal story problem geared to the level of math for your grade. Give students another math problem. Guide them as they solve the problem, and write down the answer. Then have the students write an animal story problem in pairs or small groups using the math problem they just solved. Label the story problems as Mountain Math, Desert Math, Grasslands Math, Ocean Math, or Wetlands Math. Use the animals within each habitat to create the characters in the problem.
- Choose a spread from one of the *About Habitat* books. Select one that portrays a variety of animals. Name the animals and count them. Create a pictograph to show the animals from that spread. For older students, name and count every animal in the book. Make a pictograph for this data.

## SCIENCE

- In groups, have the children choose one animal from the habitat you are studying. You might list the animals from which they can choose on the board. Go to the library and have each group find a book about their animal. You may want the librarian to preselect the books for their reading level. The group will take turns reading the book aloud to one another. Write down simple facts about that animal.
  - Use a note-taking form to help guide them to relevant facts. **Notes:** *habitat, color, food it eats, size, activity level, time of day it's awake, average litter size, etc.*
  - Create a poster about their animal using their simple facts and pictures to show the information that they learned, either individually or as a group.
- After reading an *About Habitats* book, talk about the different places within the habitat where these animals live. Discuss how the different animals are suited to live there or how they use their bodies to fit in to that part of the habitat. For example, the badger lives in a grassland habitat. It digs burrows. It has sharp claws for digging. The claws are **adaptations** that make the badger suited to live there. The back matter will give additional information.
- Introduce a simple food chain using the plants and animals in a particular habitat. Show the students an example. Have them write a food chain and illustrate it. Each time you read another *About Habitats* book, make a new food chain.

## ART

- Bring in something representative of a habitat, such as grasses with seed heads, moss, leaves, or anything that might represent the biome you're studying. Use pencils or crayons to make rubbings.
- Make an animal mask using craft paper and yarn or paper plates. Draw and color the animal's face and attach the yarn to fit. Use the masks in an animal dance.
- Create drawings to show representative plants from each *About Habitats* book.

## DANCE & MOVEMENT

- Name an animal from one of the *About Habitats* books. In a circle, ask the students to act it out by moving like that animal. Change animals to include some of the other animals from the book.
- Create an animal dance. Using the masks made in the art activity, have each student come up with moves that represent his/her animal. Use background music as each person presents his/her animal dance. You can do this one at a time or in a large group.

## CROSS CURRICULUM

- Choose an animal from one of the *About Habitat* books. Identify it as amphibian, reptile, fish, bird, or mammal. Discuss the characteristics of that group of animals. Illustrate the life cycle of that animal using words or art.
- Make an illustrated picture dictionary using the glossary vocabulary. Students can create their own dictionary or do a class project, where small groups present their assigned word. Put all the words together. Do this for each habitat.

## WEB RESOURCES

More Habitat Activities:

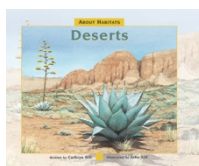
[www.uen.org/themepark/habitat/habitat.shtml](http://www.uen.org/themepark/habitat/habitat.shtml)

Habitat Word Searches:

[www.wordsearchfun.com/67405\\_Biology\\_Habitats\\_wordsearch.html](http://www.wordsearchfun.com/67405_Biology_Habitats_wordsearch.html)

[www.wordsearchfun.com/20845\\_Animal\\_Habitats\\_wordsearch.html](http://www.wordsearchfun.com/20845_Animal_Habitats_wordsearch.html)

## AWARDS AND PRAISE

**About Habitats: Deserts**



HC: 978-1-56145-641-3

PB: 978-1-56145-636-9

"A great choice for beginning readers and for sharing aloud, this elegant blend of clearly presented facts and starkly beautiful paintings makes an informative introduction to a harsh environment and the adaptations made by the plants and animals that live there." —**School Library Journal**

"...this handsome book introduces deserts...some of the paintings focus on particular plants or animals, while others show broad landscapes, but all are well composed, delicately colored, and sensitively lit...accessible to very young children as well as older students, this provides an appealing introduction to deserts."

—**Booklist**

-  Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year
-  Society of School Librarians International Book Award (Science K–6)

**About Habitats: Forests**

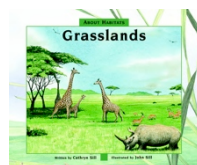
HC: 978-1-56145-734-2

"It can be easy to forget that sometimes readers just need a simple concept, presented without bells and whistles: this book does just that... This is another strong series book for the Sills and would be a fine addition to elementary school and public libraries."

—**School Library Journal**

"Teachers of young children will welcome this sixth volume of the *About Habitats* series. Using basic language, Cathryn Sill writes one sentence to describe each of John Sill's beautifully detailed color paintings... [T]his is an effective, gentle, and realistic introduction." —**Booklist**

"Need an engaging K–2 book to help you teach habitats? *Forests* does a wonderful job of introducing early childhood learners to forest habitats and the organisms found there. ...*Forests* supports Next Generation Science Standard 2-LS4-1 and would serve well as an introduction to the concept of habitat for the young learner." —**NSTA Recommends**



**About Habitats: Grasslands**

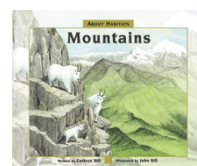
HC: 978-1-56145-559-1

"...simple, informative sentences paired with beautifully detailed watercolor paintings... Great for classroom sharing."

—**Booklist**

"An award-winning nature series for the very young, the Sills' series are fabulously detailed and informative guides...beautifully illustrated... Perfect [for] first-time book reports." —**Voice-Tribune**

-  North Carolina Author Awards (nominee, AAUW Award for Juvenile Literature) —North Carolina Literary & Historical Association
-  Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12 —NSTA / CBC

**About Habitats: Mountains**



HC: 978-1-56145-469-3

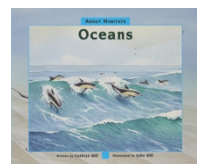
PB: 978-1-56145-731-1

"A solid introduction sure to help readers develop an appreciation for the scope and unique beauty of the mountains and mountain ranges that grace our planet." —**Kirkus Reviews**

"A beautiful and informative selection."

—**School Library Journal**

-  Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year
-  Kansas National Education Association State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (primary)

**About Habitats: Oceans**

HC: 978-1-56145-618-5

PB: 978-1-56145-960-5

"...This handsome volume from the Sills' *About Habitats* series introduces the world's largest habitat...The paintings are notable for the subtle use of color to recreate effects of water and light within the scenes...[A] fine addition to science collections..."

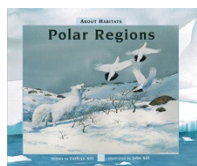
—**Booklist**

"A lovely primer on Earth's largest habitat, this book illustrates all the ocean basics with spare text and vivid



watercolors. A detailed afterword allows readers to dig deeper.” —**Scholastic Parent and Child Magazine**

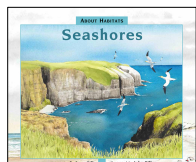
- 📖 Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12 —NSTA / CBC
- 📖 North Carolina Author Awards (AAUW Award for Juvenile Literature) —North Carolina Literary & Historical Association
- 📖 Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (primary) —Kansas National Education Association



**About Habitats: Polar Regions**  
HC: 978-1-56145-832-5

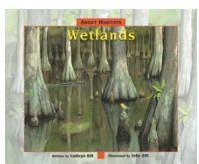
“A solid read-aloud to introduce young children to this area of the world.”  
—**School Library Journal**

“Given the demand for informational picture books on Arctic and Antarctic regions and their wildlife, libraries will find this a particularly useful addition to the Sills’ handsome *About Habitats* series.” —**Booklist Online**



**About Habitats: Seashores**  
HC: 978-1-56145-968-1

“With reliable information and attractive illustrations, this volume is a useful addition to a series celebrating its tenth year.” —**Booklist**



**About Habitats: Wetlands**  
HC: 978-1-56145-432-0  
PB: 978-1-56145-689-5

“This book will appeal to all readers interested in habitats...clear, precise, and easy to understand... Meticulous illustrations bring each scene to life...” —**Library Media Connection**

“The artwork is stunning, filled with realistic details and a beautiful balance of colors. The format would work well as a read-aloud.” —**School Library Journal**

- 📖 AAUW Award for Juvenile Literature
- 📖 Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (primary)



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR**

Cathryn and John Sill are the dynamic team behind the *About...* series as well as the *About Habitats* series. Cathryn is a graduate of Western Carolina State University and a retired elementary school teacher. John is a prize-winning and widely published wildlife artist who holds a BS in Wildlife Biology from North Carolina State University. In their school presentation *The Making of a Children's Series*, the Sills cover the process of creating a book from original idea to final book, including planning, journaling, researching, writing, editing, proofing, and illustrating. Cathryn emphasizes the writing; she shows materials from actual projects and talks about the printing process. John gives a brief demonstration of the steps he goes through to illustrate books. This program is packed with fun examples of their past work experiences and facts about the creatures featured in their books. The Sills live in Franklin, North Carolina.

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for  
**ABOUT HABITATS SERIES**

prepared by Shirley Smith Duke and Kenyette Kilpatrick

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary Word-Study Sheet

Write one vocabulary word in the middle of the cube and fill in the boxes. Keep all your word-study sheets in a vocabulary notebook.

<div>Write the definition in your own words.</div>	<div>Write the definition from the dictionary.</div>
<div>Write the vocabulary word.</div>	
<div>Write about your personal experience with the word.</div>	<div>Draw a picture that illustrates the word.</div>