

Bubble blowing adaptations activity

This activity links in with the lesson plan and information also available for habitats and adaptations.

AIM:

This activity will help pupils to understand why marine creatures need special adaptations to help them survive in their habitat. All you need for this activity are pupils and bubbles!

Begin by discussing how and where we find our food. How did people find food before there were shops to buy from? How would you catch food if you were stranded on a desert island? Next, talk about how animals in the wild find and catch their food. Animals have many different adaptations to help them; for example anteaters have long slender snouts to reach into anthills, and cheetahs can run very fast to catch their prey.

In the sea, many animals pursue their prey (like sharks and dolphins) but what about the animals which don't move, like sea anemones and barnacles? These animals attach to hard surfaces such as rocks or wind turbine monopiles and need to capture food which is swimming/drifting past in the water. This activity encourages the pupils to explore these concepts.

ACTIVITY:

The pupils sit on the floor in a circle with one child (the bubble blower) in the centre. The children are sea anemones, and the bubbles are prey (tiny particles of food in the water). The bubble blower blows bubbles around the circle and the children must catch as many as possible, while remaining seated in one place. After a few minutes, ask the children how they found the activity and what they needed to do to catch the bubbles. They will have realised that to catch food, they need to stretch out their arms and wave them about, just as sea anemones do with their tentacles.

[As an addition to this activity, if you have the space and the resources, why not try offering children objects to 'extend their limbs', such as tennis rackets, sticks and ostrich feathers or even rolled up or fanned out newspaper or card. Ask them to work out which is most effective and see how these compare to the feeding adaptations of real animals.]

Next, ask the children to become dolphins and explain that the bubbles are fish. This time, the children can 'swim' around chasing their prey. After a few minutes ask the children if this was an easier way to feed; did they catch more? Did they get tired out? This may prompt a discussion about energy gained and lost and the balance which is needed between energy used and consumed.