

Guard Birds

Companion Text: The Jakry Kids: Curiosity Shop, by Lin Jakary & illustrated by Ryan Olson
Subject Area & Grade Level: Science, Kindergarten

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define “territorial”
- Explain how and why some animals are territorial
- Evaluate which physical characteristics would make an animal a good protector

Staging Activity

Read the story once through without stopping. Then, return to pages 6 and 7, reread page 7, and ask students to describe the birds they see there. Write their suggestions on the board, and try to get students to differentiate between characteristics they can see (large, sharp beaks, colorful) and characteristics they might be inferring (territorial, prone to attack).

Core Activity

Ask students why they think Marlita chose the birds she did to guard the entrance to her Curiosity Shop. What was it about “the way that they said it, the look that they gave” that made the kids “pay close attention, straighten up, and behave?”

Review the characteristics of the birds that students just named. Three of these characteristics—sharp beaks, talons (sharp, pointed claws on their feet), and keen eyesight—are the main attributes of birds of prey. Birds of prey are territorial animals, meaning that they have a strong need to defend a certain territory or area from other animals. Explain that when animals are territorial in the wild, it is usually to maintain an adequate food supply for themselves and their young, and a safe place for their young to grow up. Ask students if they can think of any ways that animals mark the territory they consider to be theirs. Explain that animals mark their territory in many ways—by leaving their scent around the perimeter, making a certain noise or song, or giving other animals threatening visual cues such as showing bold colors, enlarging one’s body in some way, or opening one’s mouth.

Extension

Ask students whether or not the birds in the story are real. Though they are not real, they have some characteristics of animals that we consider to be territorial—they are large, easy-to-notice because of their coloration, and possess the birds of prey attributes listed above. Ask students if they can think of any animals other than birds that are territorial (tigers, wolves, bears, dogs, cats, bees and some primates). Have each student draw and color an animal—real or pretend—that would make a good guard animal. Display the pictures, and point out their similarities and differences to highlight the physical characteristics which would make an animal a good “guard animal.”

