

About Habitats SERIES

Written by Cathryn Sill and
Illustrated by John Sill

All books: 10 x 8½ | 40 pages | Children's, Ages 3-8

Book Level Scores

Title	Fountas & Pinnell		
	Level	Grade Level	Genre
About Habitats: Deserts	J	2	I
About Habitats: Grasslands	I	1-2	
About Habitats: Mountains	I	1-2	
About Habitats: Oceans	J	2	
About Habitats: Wetlands	J	2	I

ABOUT THE BOOKS

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.

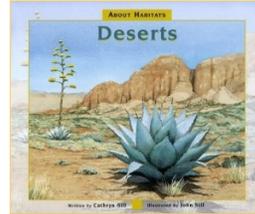
THEMES

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

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Most activities in this guide can be adapted to all the About Habitats Series books.

AWARDS AND PRAISE FOR THE BOOKS

About Habitats: DESERTS



Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-390-0

Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-636-9

This new series for the very young highlights the defining characteristics of habitats, including the plant and animal life, using examples from around the world.

"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: WETLANDS



Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-432-7

The second title in the series highlights the defining characteristics of various habitats, including the plant and animal life, using examples from around the world.

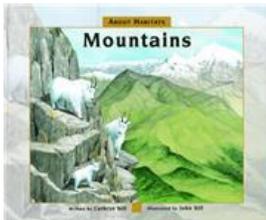
"This book will appeal to all readers interested in habitats...clear, precise, and easy to understand...meticulous illustrations bring each scene to life..."

—**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 Habitats: MOUNTAINS



Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-469-3

This book explores the major attributes and majestic beauty of mountains, using examples from around the globe. In simple, easy-to-understand language, this guide teaches children what mountains are and what kinds of animals and plants live there.

“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 planets.”

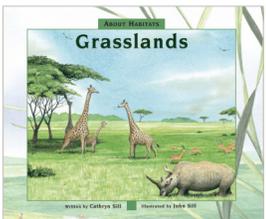
—**Kirkus Reviews**

“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: GRASSLANDS



Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-559-1

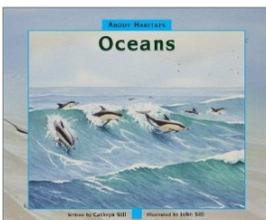
The latest book in this acclaimed series explores the major attributes of the grassland biome and showcases its striking beauty and remarkable diversity using examples from around the globe.

“...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**

“...Clear, distinctive text narrates the facts about the habitat, its distinguishing characteristics, and the plant and animal life there... The Sills’ love of science is evident in the text and lovely, full-paged art that adds detail to the information...” —**Simply Science blog**

- 📖 North Carolina Author Awards (nominee, AAUW Award for Juvenile Literature) —*North Carolina Literary & Historical Association 2011*
- 📖 Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12 —*NSTA / CBC 2012*



About Habitats: OCEANS
(SPRING 2012)

Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-618-5

A thoughtful yet entertaining glimpse into the amazing world of the ocean for young children.

2 About Habitats series

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

SCIENCE (Provided by the National Science Education Standards) Standard C

K-4: All students should develop understanding of the characteristics of organisms, the life cycles of organisms, and of organisms and environments. Standard F

K-4: All students should develop understanding of changes in environments.

MATH (Provided by the NCTM Math Standards K-4)

K-4: Students can relate pictures and diagrams to mathematical ideas.

K-4: Students can use mathematics in other curriculum areas.

K-4: Math curriculum should include experiences with data analysis so that students can construct, read, and interpret displays of data.

SOCIAL STUDIES

People, Places, and Environments

Learners should use maps, globes, photographs, and graphs to generate, manipulate, and describe relationships among varying regional and global patterns of geographic phenomena such as landforms, climate, and natural resources.

Learners should be challenged to speculate about and explain physical system changes, such as seasons, climate, and weather.

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 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.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Tell them to look for the things that make this biome special as you read the book.

As You Read

- Read the book aloud to the class straight through 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 or know the meaning. 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 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? Tell why.
10. Why is it important to have many different habitats in the world?

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.

Language Arts

1. 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.
2. Have students create a habitat chart for the selected habitat. Divide a page into four sections. Have them 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.
3. 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 name.
4. 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 them write the meaning to post on their desk.
5. Put students in small groups of three and allow them to choose a habitat to discuss. Have them 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 from a habitat wins in that category. The group with the most wins is the winner of the game.

Social Studies

1. 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.
2. 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

1. 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
2. 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

1. 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.
2. 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
 3. Introduce a simple food chain using the plants and animals in a particular habitat. Show the students an example. Have them write the food chain and illustrate it. Each time you read another About Habitats book, make a new food chain.

Art

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Create cut paper or drawings to show representative plants from each habitat book.

Dance and Movement

1. Name an animal from one of the habitat 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.
2. 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

1. 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.
2. 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.

Additional Activities

More Habitat Activities

www.uen.org/themepark/habitat/habitat.shtml

Habitat Word Search

www.wordsearchfun.com/67405_Biology_Habitats_wordsearch.html

www.wordsearchfun.com/20845_Animal_Habitats_wordsearch.html

Biome Map and Activities

www.worldbiomes.com/biomes_map.htm

To download additional Peachtree Teacher's Guides visit www.peachtree-online.com, then go to the Teacher's Guides link.

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for About Habitats series was prepared by Shirley Smith Duke and Kenya Kilpatrick.

About the Author and Illustrator



Cathryn and John Sill are the dynamic team behind the About... series as well as the new 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.

(Intended audience: Grades K-5) E

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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.

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