

Nova's Nocturnal Discovery: Understanding Habitats

Learning objective: To identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different habitats.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Think deeply about how living things rely on their specific surroundings.

Nova the barn owl silently glides over the ancient woodland, her sharp eyes scanning the forest floor. She is perfectly adapted for her environment; her soft feathers allow for silent flight, enabling her to hunt without alerting her prey. Below her, the woodland floor is a bustling habitat, home to mosses, fungi, and various beetles. Nova knows that every creature here has a specialised role. The moss provides moisture for invertebrates, while the fungi decompose dead matter to enrich the soil.

Far away, Finn the dolphin navigates the vast, salty habitat of the ocean. Unlike the forest, this environment requires different adaptations, such as sleek skin for hydrodynamics and blowholes for breathing at the surface. Whether it is the dense canopy of a rainforest or the arid expanse of a desert, every habitat supports a unique web of life. If one part of this web is disturbed, the entire balance of the ecosystem can shift. Habitats are not just places where animals live; they are complex networks where every organism, from the smallest blade of grass to the largest predator, relies on its surroundings to survive and thrive.

Word bank: adaptation · environment · nocturnal · camouflage · ecosystem · specialised

1. Identify two physical adaptations Nova the owl possesses that help her survive in her habitat. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what is the role of fungi within the woodland habitat? (2 marks)

3. Explain why Finn the dolphin would struggle to survive if he were moved to the woodland habitat. (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the environmental challenges faced by creatures living in the ocean versus those in the forest. (3 marks)

5. Justify why it is important for humans to protect habitats from being disturbed. What might happen to the ecosystem if a key species were removed? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Habitat Split-Screen'. On one side, sketch a woodland scene with Nova the owl; on the other, sketch an ocean scene with Finn the dolphin. Label one adaptation for each animal.



Extension challenge: Research a specific habitat (such as a polar region or a coral reef). Create a 'Survival Profile' for an animal that lives there, explaining three ways its body is perfectly suited to that climate.