Adaptations in the Animal Kingdom

Learning objective: To understand how animals are adapted to suit their environment in different ways.

Read the passage below carefully and answer the questions using evidence from the text.

Nova the barn owl spends her nights soaring silently through the woodland. She is perfectly adapted for her environment. Her soft, fringed feathers allow her to fly without making a sound, which helps her surprise prey. Her large, dark eyes are specially designed to gather the smallest amounts of light, allowing her to hunt efficiently in the dark.

Meanwhile, in the hot savannah, Leo the lion has developed different traits. His golden-brown fur acts as camouflage, blending in with the tall, dry grass so he can stalk his prey unnoticed. His powerful paws are designed for speed and strength, essential for catching food in the open plains.

Every creature possesses specific characteristics that aid their survival. Whether it is the thick layer of fat on a seal keeping it warm in icy waters, or the long, thin beak of a bird designed to reach nectar inside a flower, these adaptations are the result of thousands of years of evolution. Without these unique features, animals would struggle to find food, stay safe, or thrive in their specific habitats.

Word bank: adaptation · environment · camouflage · nocturnal · survival · characteristic

1. Identify two physical features of the barn owl mentioned in the text that assist with hunting. (1 mark) (1 mark)

2. How does Leo the lion’s fur help him survive in his specific habitat? (1 mark) (1 mark)

3. Why is it important for an animal’s feathers or fur to be suited to its environment? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, why might a nocturnal animal like Nova have different physical adaptations compared to a lion? (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. If an animal's environment changed suddenly, for example if a forest became a desert, do you think it would be able to survive? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw an imaginary animal of your own creation and label three specific body parts that help it survive in its chosen habitat (e.g., a desert, the deep ocean, or a rainforest).

Extension challenge: Research an animal that lives in the Arctic. Create a fact file explaining how its body is adapted to survive in freezing temperatures.