

# The Jeff Corwin Experience

## Animal Encounters

### Teacher's Guide



**Grade Level:** K-8

**Curriculum Focus:** Life Science

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

## Program Description

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Of all the animals Jeff Corwin has encountered over the years, which are his favorites? Follow along as he treks the globe to showcase bats, primates, tigers, sloths, pandas, eagles and sharks.

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## Video Index

### Segment 1: Favorite Snakes (5 min.)

#### *Description*

Travel to locations around the world to observe Jeff Corwin's favorite snakes: the venomous fer-de-lance, Thailand's reticulated python, Tanzania's boomslang, and the African rock python.

#### *Pre-viewing question*

What do you know about snakes?

Answer: Answers will vary; students may say that snakes give poisonous bites or that they are scary.

#### *Post-viewing question*

What do the fer-de-lance and boomslang have in common?

Answer: Both snakes are venomous and dangerous.

### Segment 2: Favorite Lizards (4 min.)

#### *Description*

Dig underground and uncover Rosenberg's goanna, observe Madagascar's pygmy chameleon, check out the caiman lizard, and see the Moroccan sand fish's tracks.

#### *Pre-viewing question*

What do snakes and lizards have in common?

Answer: Snakes and lizards are reptiles.

#### *Post-viewing question*

Why does the sand fish of Morocco live under the sand?

Answer: It can stay cool in the desert heat.

### Segment 3: Bugs and Arachnids (4 min.)

#### *Description*

Meet some unique insects and arachnids of the world: the strange-looking cricket of Ecuador, the venomous tarantula of Brazil, and Madagascar's leaf mimic.

***Pre-viewing question***

What is the difference between insects and arachnids?

Answer: Insects have six legs, antennae, and three body parts; arachnids have eight legs, two body parts, and no antennae.

***Post-viewing question***

How does the leaf mimic blend in to tree leaves?

Answer: The leaf mimic's body has a brown spot that resembles a brown, dying leaf.

**Segment 4: Favorite Flying Creatures (3 min.)**

***Description***

Discover unique flying creatures: Kittis hog-nosed bats, the harpy eagle of Panama, and Indonesia's flying foxes. Find out where these animals live and how they find food.

***Pre-viewing question***

How do you think the ability to fly benefits some animals?

Answer: Flying allows some animals to find food efficiently – including as a predator – and to flee predators.

***Post-viewing question***

How does the flying fox find food?

Answer: Its keen vision and excellent sense of smell help it sniff out fruit, a mainstay of its diet.

**Segment 5: Favorite Swimming Creatures (3 min.)**

***Description***

From the ocean to the Amazon, many creatures spend their lives in the water. Meet a few unique and interesting animals.

***Pre-viewing question***

What kinds of animals live in water?

Answer: Fish, turtles, whales, and giant river otters.

***Post-viewing question***

How does the pirarucu breathe?

Answer: The pirarucu has gills, and it stores oxygen in a swim bladder.

**Segment 6: Favorite Primates (2 min.)**

***Description***

Visit the orangutan of Borneo and the red-faced uakari of Brazil. See the orangutan's powerful arms in motion and observe the rare uakari close-up.



***Pre-viewing question***

What do you know about primates?

Answer: Answers will vary, and students will mention that monkeys, apes, and perhaps orangutans are primates.

***Post-viewing question***

How does the orangutan move from branch to branch?

Answer: The orangutan uses its powerful arms to move through the forest.

**Segment 7: Favorite Really Big Animals (3 min.)**

Large animals of all kinds live on our planet. Meet the Komodo dragon of Indonesia, the tigers of Thailand, and Borneo's Asian elephants.

***Pre-viewing question***

What are your favorite large animals?

Answer: Answers will vary.

***Post-viewing question***

Answer: The adult elephants were afraid that someone was after their young, and they were prepared to charge.

**Segment 8: Weird Favorites (6 min.)**

**Description**

The Bufo toad, the red panda, and tenrecs are unique animals. Decide which one is your favorite.

***Pre-viewing question***

What is the most unique animal you have ever seen?

Answer: Answers will vary.

***Post-viewing question***

What is unique about the Bufo toad?

Answer: The world's largest toad produces poison, and it can eat an animal as large as an opossum.

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**Lesson Plan**

***Student Objectives***

- View the program to learn about Jeff Corwin's favorite animals.
- Choose a favorite animal from the program.
- Write an essay describing the animal and explaining your choice.



## Materials

- *The Jeff Corwin Experience: Animal Encounters* video
- Computer(s) with Internet access
- Paper and pencils
- Construction paper and colored pencils

## Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to view *The Jeff Corwin Experience: Animal Encounters*. Suggest that students pay close attention to the range of animals.
2. After students have finished watching the program, hold a brief discussion about the eight animals featured in the program. They include the following:
  - Reptiles, including snakes and lizards
  - Insects and arachnids
  - Flying creatures, including birds and bats
  - Creatures that swim, including turtles and otters
  - Mammals, including primates, elephants, and tigers
  - Unusual animals, including the Bufo toad
3. Tell students that it's their turn to choose a favorite animal from the program. Have them write an essay about their choice and include the following information:
  - Animal name
  - Type of animal (i.e. reptile, amphibian, mammal)
  - A detailed description the animal's appearance
  - A description of animal's habitat
  - A description of its food
  - Reason for choice
4. Give students time in class to work on their essays; encourage them draw or find a picture of the animal.
5. During the next class period, ask volunteers to share their essays. Collect the essays and compile them into a class book entitled *Favorite Animals*. Ask volunteers to create a cover and a Table of Contents page. Leave the book out for visitors to the classroom.



## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions and wrote an informative and interesting essay, providing sound reasons explaining why the animal was their favorite.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions and wrote a satisfactory essay, providing some reasons explaining why the animal was their favorite.
- 1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions and did not complete the essay explaining why the animal was their favorite.

## Vocabulary

### **amphibian**

*Definition:* A group of cold-blooded animals with backbones; most spend their early lives in water and their adult lives on land.

*Context:* The Bufo toad in Guyana is an amphibian that has the distinction of being the largest toad in the world.

### **habitat**

*Definition:* The area an organism normally lives

*Context:* If an animal's habitat is changed in some way, the animal is at a higher risk of becoming endangered.

### **reptile**

*Definition:* A group of cold-blooded animals that have scaly skin and lay eggs with leathery shells

*Context:* One of Jeff Corwin's favorite reptiles is the fer-de-lance, a venomous snake.

### **mammal**

*Definition:* Warm-blooded vertebrates with hair or fur on their bodies that produce live young, and can be nourished by their mothers

*Context:* Jeff Corwin is interested in how large mammals such as the Asian elephant survives in its habitat.

### **primate**

*Definition:* A group of mammals that can grasp objects with their hands and feet; have nails instead of claws on some of their hands and feet; depend on vision as their primary sense; and tend to live in social groups

*Context:* The uakari monkey in Brazil is one of the world's most endangered primates.



## Academic Standards

### National Academy of Sciences

The National Academy of Sciences provides guidelines for teaching science in grades K-12 to promote scientific literacy. To view the standards, visit this Web site:

<http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/html/overview.html#content>.

This discussion guide addresses the following science standards:

Grades K-4

- Life Science: Organisms and environments

Grades 5-8

- Life Science: Populations and ecosystems; Diversity and adaptations of organisms

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This discussion guide addresses the following national standards:

- Life Science: Understands the relationships among organisms in their physical environment; Understands biological evolution and the diversity of life
- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

## Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

