

Get Smart with Art Lesson

Endangered Animals

Lesson Created by the Virgin Valley Artists Association of Mesquite, NV

For Parents: In this lesson, students will learn what it means to say that an animal is endangered and they will explore some reasons why an animal becomes endangered. Students will create a real or imaginary animal from playdough, polymer clay, or homemade clay (numerous recipes are found on-line). The student may choose to draw or paint the animal instead of making a clay representation.

Supplies Needed: Playdough, polymer or homemade clay, or drawing/painting materials. If your child resides in Mesquite, NV or the Virgin Valley area and needs supplies for this lesson, send email to lindaharrisvva@gmail.com.

For Students: Have you heard the words “endangered animals”? Scientists say that an animal is endangered when there aren’t many of them living in their natural habitat anymore. Any kind of animal, plant or bug can become endangered. There are several reasons why animals can become endangered, but one important reason is because they lose too much of their natural habitat. If that happens, they are not able to find as much food and water. They may not have protection from predators or a safe place to raise their young. Can you think of any other reasons that an animal could become endangered?



Orangutans are native to Indonesia and Malaysia. They once lived throughout Southeast China and Southeast Asia. Orangutans are now found in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra.



Asian Elephants inhabit 13 countries, including Africa and India. Why do you think they might have become endangered?

The Ethiopian Wolf is the most endangered carnivore of Africa. It is similar to the coyote in its size and build. It's long and narrow skull and red and white fur distinguishes it from other species.



The Tasmanian Devil was once native to Australia and Tasmania. Its population was greatly reduced due to a contagious cancer known as Devil Facial Tumor Disease.



Mountain Gorillas live high in the Mountains in Africa at elevations of 8,000 to 13,000 feet. There are only about 1,000 of these gorillas left.

Can you think of an animal in Nevada which is protected?



If you guessed the Desert Tortoise, you are correct! The Desert Tortoise is a protected species in Nevada. It is found in the Mojave Desert and can live to be 80 years old!

Your turn: Use Playdough, polymer clay, or homemade clay to form a real or imaginary animal. If you don't have clay, you may draw or paint a picture of an animal. Below are some animals that the students in the Mesquite, NV Get Smart with Art classroom created. Have fun!



This lesson was designed and written by Norma Sachar and Linda Harris, VVAA members.