



# Grassland Habitat

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3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE • 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

SUMMER LESSONS



Extended Learning Partnership

# Grasslands: What is a Habitat?

In our other lessons, we have talked about structures that both plants and animals have to help them survive. We call these adaptations. You saw many adaptations in our Grasslands video, including adaptations of the acacia tree and the giraffe. Not only do the acacia and giraffe have specially adapted structures, but they interact with each other in a special way.

Giraffes love to eat acacia leaves, but the acacia trees do not want to be eaten! Their branches are covered in long, sharp spines to protect them. Giraffes have a few adaptations to help them eat acacia leaves. Their long tongues help by pulling the leaves from the branches and avoid some of the thorns. Sticky saliva also coats their food as they chew, which helps to protect their mouth and throat from any thorns they do eat. Not many animals can get past the acacia's thorns, but giraffes can!

## Activity:

- Lots of plants have ways to protect themselves from being eaten. Take a walk around your yard, neighborhood, local park, or look up plants on the internet. Look at some plants and see if you notice anything that might make them hard for an animal to eat.

## Writing prompt:

- Acacia trees do something else special. They make a very sweet nectar on their branches. This nectar attracts ants. The ants will stay and make their homes in big, hollow thorns on the acacia tree. Can you think of a reason why this might help the acacia tree? Write out your ideas!

## Math:

- The branch of an acacia tree has twelve thorns. If the acacia tree has four branches, how many thorns does it have?
- A second tree has six branches. Each branch has five thorns. How many thorns does this tree have?
- Which acacia tree has more thorns?

## Check for Understanding:

- What adaptations does a giraffe have to help it eat acacia leaves?

