

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL ANIMALS

Lesson Plan

Looking at Life Cycles

Lesson Plan for *Axolotls*

Grade 3

Objective

To help students use a text and a diagram to compare an axolotl's unique life cycle to the life cycles of other amphibians.

Things Needed

- *Axolotls* book
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Have students read the *Axolotls* book on their own. Then come back together as a class.

Activity

Have a group discussion to review some of the book's main ideas. First, turn to pages 6–7 and ask the following questions:

- Where do amphibians live at different stages of life? (Answer: Most amphibians live in water when they are young and on land after they become adults.)
- Where do axolotls live as they grow up? (Answer: Axolotls live their whole lives in water.)

Second, turn to pages 14–15 and ask these questions:

- What is metamorphosis? (Answer: Metamorphosis is a complete change in an animal's body during growth. The animal loses some body parts and develops others.)
- How do the bodies of most amphibians change during metamorphosis? (Most amphibians start as tadpoles with gills and a tail. They lose these body parts and grow into adults with lungs and legs.)
- How does an axolotl's body change as it grows? (Axolotls develop lungs and legs but do not lose their gills or tails.)



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Third, turn to pages 16–17 and ask these questions:

- What are the life stages of most amphibians, such as frogs? (Answer: Adults lay eggs. Tadpoles hatch from the eggs. The tadpoles live in water. Then they go through metamorphosis to become adults that live on land.)
- What are the life stages of axolotls? (Answers: Adults lay eggs. Tadpoles hatch from the eggs. They live in water. To become adults, they grow legs and lungs but don't lose their gills or tail.)

Based on these three parts of the book, ask students to write down two similarities and two differences between axolotls and other amphibians.

Evaluation

Collect the papers at the end of class. Using the sample answers as a guide, give each student 2 points for each correct answer, for up to 8 points total.

Similarities:

- Axolotls and other amphibians both lay eggs. The eggs hatch into tadpoles that live in the water.
- Both have gills and tails when young. Both grow lungs and legs when they become adults.
- Both spend part of their lives in the water.

Differences:

- Other amphibians such as frogs go through metamorphosis. They lose their gills and tail when they change from tadpoles to adults. They grow legs and lungs in order to live on land.
- Axolotls do not go through metamorphosis. They do not lose any body parts (gills or tail) when they grow into adults.
- Adult frogs live on land, but adult axolotls stay in the water.

Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 3 (RI 3.1, 3.7), and the National Science Education Standards' Content Standard C, grades K–4.

