

# What does ‘Endangered’ mean?

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This activity explains why animals need their “special places” and what happens to animals when these places are destroyed, and gives students a reason for learning more about the subject.

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**Time required:** 30 minutes

## **Instructions for the Teacher:**

1. Ask students:

### ***What are the things that you need to survive?***

Record answers on the board without comment. The resulting list may be broken down into basics (e.g. water) and frills (e.g. television, quiet time in nature). Next, ask students for their assistance in circling all of those needs that a wild animal also has. Whether or not animals share the same psychological needs as humans (i.e. love, togetherness, etc.) will make for an interesting discussion! Students should realize that wild animals and humans share the same fundamental physical needs of food, water, shelter, air, and space.

### ***What if you lost your home? What would happen to you? What would you do?***

This question is designed to get students thinking about something that we all have and we all need: our home. Just like any other animal, humans need food, water and shelter to survive: we can find these three things in everyone’s home! If a student were to lose their home – and couldn’t find anyone to go and live with – they’d be in serious trouble indeed!

Many plants and animals on this planet ***are*** in serious trouble for exactly this same reason: they have lost their homes. If a single animal loses its home and has nowhere else to go, it dies; if enough of these animals lose their homes and die, then the species becomes an endangered species, because it is in danger of extinction.



### ***What does the word “Endangered” mean to you?***

***Use this word in a sentence.***

Endangered means “to have been put in danger”. More simply, it means “in danger;” this may be easier for younger students to understand.

***Have you ever heard of an endangered species? What is an endangered species in danger of?***

An endangered species is in danger of becoming extinct.

***Define for me what “Extinct” means.***

Tell students that when all the members of an animal species die, that animal is said to be extinct. When the number of animals is low enough so that the species is in *danger* of becoming extinct, the species is said to be endangered.

### **Outdoors: a Special Place Activity**

2. Tell your students that you are about to take them to a large natural area that is one of your very special places. Choose a pleasant, calm area - preferably within walking distance of the school.

At the area, invite students to spread out and find a place that they like or feel is special. Remember to set a boundary on how far they can go. Have them sit in their special spot and write about how that spot makes them feel - this could be a drawing, a poem, or a few paragraphs.

3. Ask the students:

***What do you like most about nature? How does it make you feel?***

Students may tell you that nature makes them feel good, or relaxed; they may tell you that they find nature to be pleasant or enjoyable. Humans need to experience nature not only because it is essential (see the SOS activity *Endangered Species - so what’s the Big Deal?*) but also because it makes us feel good!

Song: Kid Hearts



Listen to the song “Kid Hearts” with your students. Point out the following words to the students: “All the lessons we’ve unlearned somehow/Kid Hearts just know”. Tell students that the authors of the song wrote these words because ‘kid hearts’ seem to recognize that to make an animal go extinct is just plain wrong! (Ask students if they agree). Hand out photocopies of a big heart for students to colour in, and have them write down all the things they know about endangered species inside the heart. Display them all to show visitors just how much “Kid Heart” you have in the class!