

What Is a Species

READ ALOUD PASSAGE

A species is a group of living things that can mate and have young, and whose young can also have young. A horse and a donkey can have a baby together, called a mule. But mules almost never have babies of their own, so horses and donkeys are two separate species.

Looking alike is a clue, not proof. Some species look almost identical, and some members of one species look nothing alike. A tiny Chihuahua and a huge Great Dane do not look like they belong together, but they are both dogs.

Members of one species are almost never exactly alike. Those differences are called variation, and they are normal. Breeds and varieties are groups people shaped inside a species. They never change what species a living thing is. A Granny Smith apple and a Red Delicious apple both grew on the same kind of tree.

Activity 1: Word Hunt

Look back at the reading. Find four nouns and write them on the lines.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Activity 2: Sentence Scramble

These words are mixed up. Put them in order to make a sentence. Start with a capital letter and end with a period.

1. exactly / of / members / one / are / almost / species / never / alike

2. change / living / a / is / they / thing / species / never / what

Activity 3: Shrink the Sentence

These sentences are long. Rewrite each one in eight words or fewer. Keep only the main idea.

1. A species is a group of living things that can mate and have young, and whose young can also have young.

Shorter sentence:

2. But mules almost never have babies of their own, so horses and donkeys are two separate species.

Shorter sentence:

3. A tiny Chihuahua and a huge Great Dane do not look like they belong together, but they are both dogs.

Shorter sentence:

Activity 4: Sentence Scramble

These words are mixed up. Put them in order to make a sentence. Start with a capital letter and end with a period.

1. horses / and / separate / are / species / donkeys

2. is / normal / species / within / a / variation

3. one / species / dogs / to / both / belong
