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READING COMPREHENSION



Lead-in activity

Before reading *The Most Important Animal of All* help children identify the title, author, illustrator and blurb on the front and back covers. Study the front cover and ask:

- What animals can you identify?
- Why do you think these animals are on the front cover?
- Looking at the title, what do you think the book will be about?

Main activity

Enjoy reading the story out loud. Pause after reading the relevant pages and ask the following questions to check for understanding, promote deeper thinking and prompt further discussion. Alternatively, these questions can be provided along with copies of the keystone species pages from the book.



The elephant:

- What are the two species of elephant?
- How do elephants use their trunks?
- How do elephants find water?
- How do elephants help other animals?
- What can elephant poo be made into?

The bee:

- What does a bee drink when it visits a flower?
- What happens to the pollen that gets stuck on a bee?
- Can you name three types of bee?
- Why do farmers like bees?
- Where do wild bees live?



English National Curriculum links:

- understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
 - discussing the significance of the title and events
- answering and asking questions
- discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary

The shark:

- How many species of shark can you name?
- What is an apex predator?
- What do sharks eat?
- Why are sharks important?
- What would happen to the population of groupers if there were no sharks?



The beaver:

- Why do some people call beavers 'nature's engineers'?
- What is a beaver's home called?
- How do beavers cut down trees to build their dams?
- How have beavers adapted to live in the water, be strong swimmers and build dams?
- How many trees can beavers cut down each year?

The bat:

- How do bats navigate in the dark?
- What would happen to lots of cocoa beans without bats?
- Why do bats have claws?
- How does bat poo help the plants and trees in their habitats?
- How do bats help to protect people from certain diseases?



The tiger:

- What is special about each tiger?
- Why are Sumatran tigers endangered?
- What has happened to the population of tigers in India and why?
- Why do tigers like to swim in the water?
- How many cubs does a female tiger have at one time?

Krill:

- Which two species of whale travel to Antarctica to eat krill?
- Can you name three animals that rely on Antarctic krill?
- How do blue whales and humpback whales eat krill?
- How big is an Antarctic krill?
- How can you tell the age of an Antarctic krill?



Extension activity

Provide a copy of the key vocabulary cards for children to cut up and match the key terms with the correct definition. These are taken from the glossary in *The Most Important Animal of All* and build understanding of the scientific terms used throughout the book. The key words and meanings have already been shuffled to allow children to cut them out without seeing the answers.

Key vocabulary

apex predators	The number of any single species in one place or in total around the world.
conservation	Changed in a very small way from one generation to the next.
diversity	An animal that spreads seeds, often by eating fruits and dropping the seeds in their poo.
ecosystem	A person or animal who designs, builds and maintains buildings, machines or structures.
endangered	An animal that is hunted by a predator.
engineer	All the animals and plants living together in one place.
evolved	An animal or plant that has a very large effect on the place and wildlife where it lives.
keystone species	Protecting and restoring nature and wildlife.
pollinator	A specific type of animal (or plant) with different characteristics to another type of the same animal.
population	A wide range of different species.
predator	Predators at the very top of the food chain that have no natural predators themselves.
prey	An animal that helps to spread pollen from one plant to another.
seed disperser	In danger of becoming extinct.
species	An animal that preys on and eats other animals.

