

Parent & Educator Guide

The Numbat Puzzle

A Tasmanian Tiger Twins Endangered Animal Adventure

teapotfulloftales.com/043

About This Story

Today's story features two amazing Australian animals: the Tasmanian tiger and the numbat. One of these animals is, sadly, already extinct. The Tasmanian tiger once roamed mainland Australia and the island of Tasmania off the coast. In the early part of the 20th century, Tasmanian tigers went extinct because of poaching by farmers who thought they were eating their sheep. It is a tragedy that these remarkable animals no longer exist.

Fortunately, we're not too late for our second featured animal. Numbats are in serious trouble – there are only about 1000 left. The Australian government has taken extraordinary steps to try to stabilize and grow their population.

In the following lesson, you can share with your children the remarkable conservation work that people around the world are undertaking to save endangered species.

Discussion Questions

These questions don't have right answers. They're meant to help you grow wisdom and virtue in your children.

1. Should Teresa have just told Ned what to do or ask him questions so that he could get to the answer himself?
 2. Timothy and Teresa are quite different from each other! What virtues do each of them display? In what areas could they improve?
 3. Ned has been eating ants for days because he thought that was what numbats ate. Was it a problem that he believed something that wasn't true? Is that always the case?
 4. The numbat is endangered because of animals that were introduced to Australia by humans. Should people have introduced foreign animals? Should people do something about it now?
 5. At the end of the story, Timothy draws his plan in the dirt before he starts building. What do you think he learned in the story? Is this a good lesson to learn?
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Homeschool Lesson: Why Do Animals Become Endangered?

Lesson Overview

Grades: K–5

Big Question: *What makes animals endangered, and what are people doing to help?*

Subjects: Science · Geography · Language Arts · Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain what it means for an animal to be endangered
- Identify at least two reasons animals become endangered
- Describe specific conservation efforts for two different endangered animals
- Compare and contrast threats and solutions across different species and continents
- Understand how human actions can both harm and help wildlife

Part 1: Before the Videos — Activate Prior Knowledge

Start by reading **The Numbat Puzzle** together. Then discuss:

- Why is Ned lucky to live in a preserve? What would happen to him outside of it?
- The story mentions that red foxes were introduced to Australia by humans. What does "introduced" mean (see vocabulary list at the end)?
- Have you heard of any other animals that are endangered? What are some of the reasons they are struggling?
- Introduce any unfamiliar vocabulary words

Part 2: Watch the Videos

Video 1: Numbat Conservation (Australia)

Watch at: youtu.be/ks6cooYtr38

As you watch, have your student listen for: What is threatening numbats? What are people doing to help?

Video 2: Hellbender Conservation (North America)

Watch at: youtu.be/5NAixeJ5E6U

The hellbender is a giant salamander native to clean, fast-moving streams in the eastern United States. It is one of the largest salamanders in the world — and one of the least known.

As you watch, listen for: What is threatening hellbenders? What are people doing to help?

Part 3: Activities

Choose one or more of these to close the lesson:

Narration (All Ages)

Have your student share their knowledge with you orally or in writing. If they are stuck, you can prompt them to share about which animal they liked better and what they know about it.

Venn Diagram (Ages 8+)

Fill out the Venn diagram worksheet to help your child organize their knowledge about the two animals. Consider providing a word bank or the list of vocabulary words.

Draw a Habitat (All Ages)

Ask your student to draw a picture of either the numbat's eucalyptus forest habitat or the hellbender's rocky stream habitat. What would a healthy version of that habitat look like? What would a damaged version look like?

Study More Endangered Animals (All Ages)

Explore additional endangered animals, especially those who are local to your area. YouTube is a treasure trove of information, but be sure to preview videos.

Vocabulary Words for This Lesson

Endangered: a species whose population is so low it may disappear entirely

Introduced species: an animal or plant brought to a new place by humans, either on purpose or by accident

Habitat: the natural environment where an animal lives and finds its food

Conservation: the effort to protect animals, plants, and natural places from harm

Captive breeding: raising animals in a protected place like a zoo so their numbers can grow before releasing them into the wild

Sedimentation: when soil and mud wash into streams and rivers, making the water cloudy and covering the rocks animals need

Compare and Contrast

about why are endangered and what people are doing to help.
Directions: Compare and contrast the two animals. Think especially

