

Structural Adaptations

1. In order to survive, all living things must be able to meet their needs for food, water, and shelter. Different body parts, (structures) and behaviors help living things meet these needs. These special parts and behaviors are called adaptations. All living things have adaptations that help them survive in their environment. How do body parts and behaviors help living organisms survive? Let's investigate!

2. First, we will look at the structural, or physical adaptations, that help living organisms survive. Structural adaptations include such things as body color, body covering, beak type, and claw type. Let's discuss a few of these structural adaptations.

3. **Body color** is a very important adaptation that helps living organisms survive in different environments. For example, polar bears are white. This allows them to blend into their snowy environment. A tiger's stripes and a giraffe's dark patches help them blend into the sun-speckled, grass-covered plains where they live. Most male birds are brightly colored. They use these bright colors to attract the attention of predators and lure them away from their mates and young. Can you think of other animals that use body color to survive?

4. **Body covering** is another important adaptation for survival. Animals that live in cold climates are covered in thick, warm fur. Birds are covered in fluffy down feathers that help keep them warm and catch the wind as they take flight. Turtles are covered by thick, hard shells that protect them from the dangers in their environment. Can you think of other animals that use their body covering to survive?

5. Birds also have structural adaptations. They have **beaks** that help them eat the foods they love. Eagles and other birds of prey have sharp, hooked beaks that are good for ripping and tearing into the flesh of their prey, while sparrows and other seed eating birds have short, pointed beaks for cracking open seeds. What kind of beaks do ducks, pelicans and other water birds have?

6. An animal's **claws** are also important to its survival. Some animals, like bears, use their claws to catch and kill, while others like gophers and prairie dogs use their claws to dig tunnels underground for protection. Can you think of other animals that use their claws to survive?