



Grades: K-5

Role-playing is a type of imaginative play that can be adapted for any subject area! Ask students to take on the role of characters in a book the class is studying and act out a scene. Ask each student to take on the role of a different animal. Discuss what type of habitat they would prefer. Role-playing gives students real-world applications for research and helps them personalize the information they are learning.

Goal: With imaginative role-play, students will work with a group to consider other perspectives and to express ideas in a discussion.

Time: 30–45 minutes

Materials: slips of paper with roles listed

Instructions:

1. Ask students if they have ever been in a new place and been unsure about how to act. (If students have trouble thinking of ideas, connect this feeling to starting in a new school or classroom!)
2. Invite the class to imagine themselves as an animal that will be arriving from another planet.
3. Divide students into groups of four, and explain that each group member will play a *different* animal as the group develops a story.
4. Give each student a slip of paper listing his or her role. Make sure they keep their roles secret! Examples are:
 - a shy animal with extra long arms from the moon
 - a talkative animal with a spiky tail from Mars
 - a clumsy animal from the Milky Way that floats around the universe
5. Ask students to think about how their characters would talk to other animals arriving on planet Earth. Then allow them to act out the scenario. Use a timer.
6. Debrief with students after the role-play. What was challenging about this activity? What helped when students were trying to communicate? How could this role-play situation connect to real life (or to a subject you are studying)?



Toy Tip!

Costumes and props can inspire students' imagination in the role-play.