



wild dog

**Wild Dog Books
Teachers' Notes**

**Follow the Equator – Life around the
Centre of the Earth**

Synopsis

The Equator is an imaginary line that runs around the centre of the Earth. The countries it passes over are hot and humid all year round. This climate has led to an amazing abundance of life. Countries along the Equator are home to two-thirds of the Earth's plant and animal species. Discover the geography of each country along the Equator, and learn about some of the unique animals that live there.

Writing style

Follow the Equator has been designed with the needs of early readers and reluctant readers in mind. Text is succinct and simple, with only a few sentences on each page. Each spread is dedicated to a different country, with multiple large format images relating directly to the text, so young readers have multiple entry points to engaging with the information. Running along the top of the spreads is an additional graphic, which aids the reader in following the geographical journey. There is a brief glossary and index in the back of the book, which will aid young readers in developing the tools of research and analysis.

Study notes

Themes:

- Biodiversity and Megadiverse environments
- Climate and terrain
- Species
- Adaptation
- Habits and breeding
- Food, predators and prey
- Migration

Curriculum link: Society and Environment

Before reading *Follow the Equator*, ask the students to look at a world map. Find the Equator and discuss with students the concept of this imaginary line, and how it divides the Earth into two hemispheres. (Pages 2-3 of the text provide multiple ways of conveying this information). Ask the students to find other images of the Equator on the Internet.

Ask the students to name and locate countries the Equator passes over. If possible, provide a template world map for students to mark these on.

Brainstorm what students think the geography and environment around the Equator might be like. (They may be surprised to learn there is a volcano in Ecuador that is permanently covered in snow.) Ask them to make a list of what sort of animals might live along the Equator, and what these animals might do in order to survive there.

Curriculum link: Science and Technology/Creative Arts

Divide the class into groups. Each group should select and research a country along the Equator.

Students should create a visual project that can be presented to the whole class. The project should include images of the selected country, along with an animal that lives there. The project should also provide answers to the following questions:

- What is that countries' national flag?
- What is the geography and climate of this country?
- What is an animal that lives there?
- How is this animal suited to this environment?
- Is this animal found anywhere else? Does this animal migrate?
- What do they eat? What is its main prey?
- Where does it spend most of its time?
- How does it reproduce?
- How many (approximately) are there in the wild? Is this animal endangered?
- Does the animal have any predators? How does the animal avoid predators, if there are any?

Ask the students to create a poster with a drawing of all of the animals that they have learnt about in this book. Under each image, ask them to list two to three facts about this animal from their research.

Play a game of 'celebrity head', labeling each student as a particular Equator animal from the book without showing the student which animal he or she is. Each student needs to try and guess which animal they are by asking questions of other students, for example, can I fly? Do I have a long, sticky tongue?

Alternatively, students should choose three facts from *Follow the Equator* that they found surprising or interesting. (For example, flamingoes aren't naturally pink – their diet of crustaceans causes them to change colour!) Combine these facts into a game for the whole class, such as trivia bingo.

Develop a crossword puzzle with the names of the animals featured in the book. Use the facts about them as clues.

Marketing and promotion

Follow the Equator – Life around the Centre of the Earth is a one-off title, though it shares many elements with the successful *Going To* and *CloseUp* series. Other titles from these series include *Going To Antarctica*, *Going To The Desert* and *Going To The Ocean*, and *Carbon CloseUp*, *Penguins CloseUp* and *Endangered CloseUp*.