BACKYARD ECOSYSTEM

A SCIENCE @ HOME ACTIVITY

ANIMAL COMMUNICATION

Grades 3-6

CHARLES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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James E. Richmond Science Center

Parent Resources for Animal Communication

Goals of this lesson:

- Students will read about the methods of human and animal communication.
- The student will color/create images to represent words.

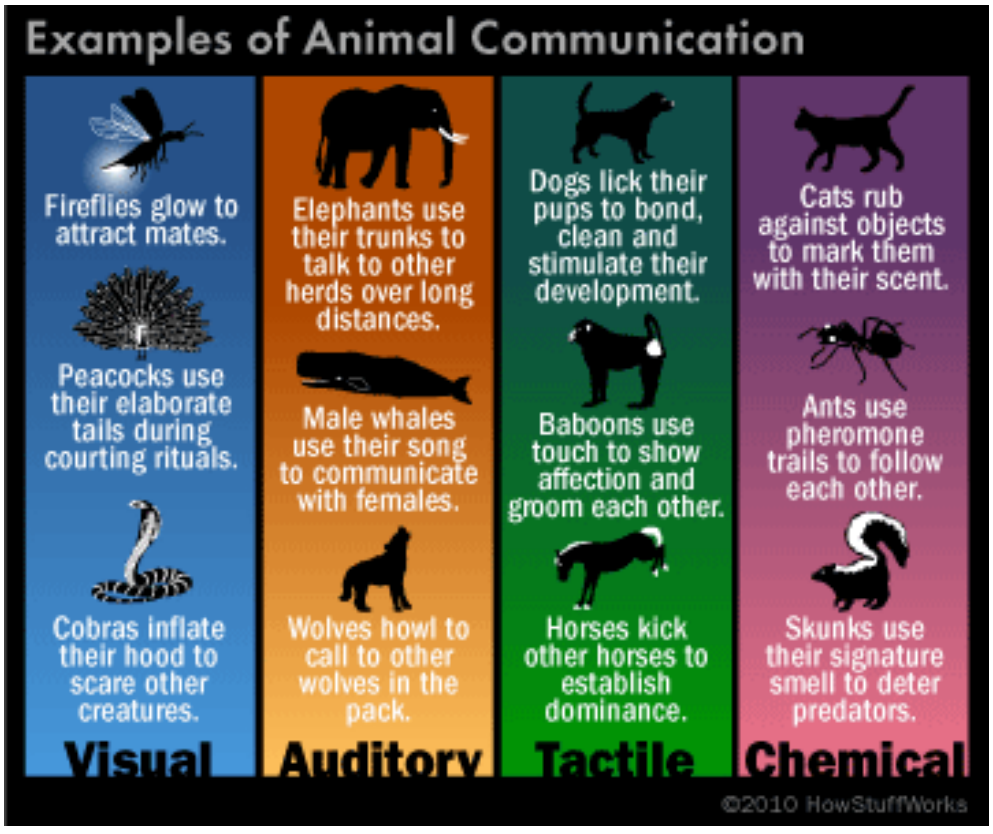
For additional information, copy and paste these links into your browser:

The Bees' Waggle Dance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU_KD1enR3Q

Amazing Animal Communication

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ2ebYNtFUA



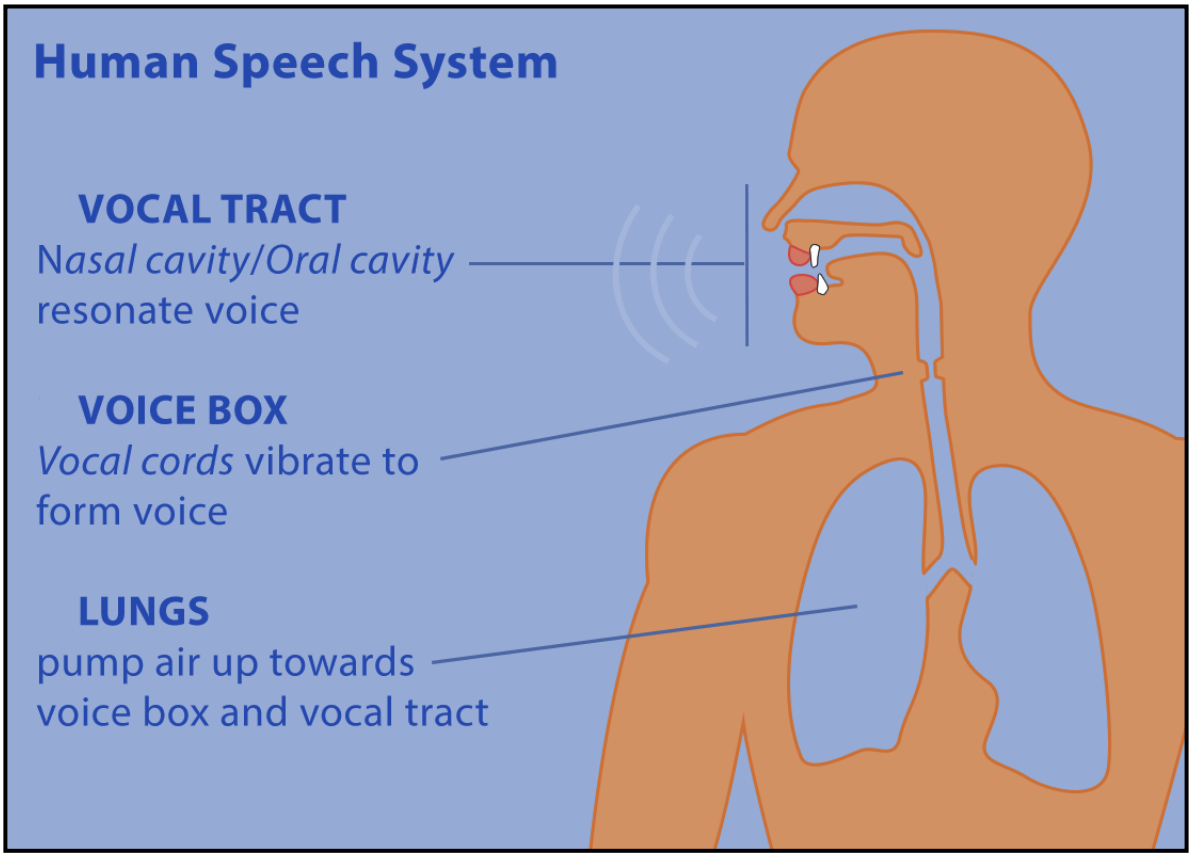
UNIT BACKYARD ECOSYSTEM LESSON 2

Animal Communication

If animals can make simple noises, why can't they talk? Humans and many animals have the body parts that produce sound: lungs, throat, voice box, lips and tongue. The difference is in the movement and position of these organs that make it possible for us to speak.

When we talk, we release controlled puffs of air from our lungs. That air passes through the voice box (larynx), then out through the mouth. The larynx is made up of cartilage and muscle, on top of which is a stretched membrane called our vocal cords, which vibrate to produce sound. We can loosen or tighten our vocal chords to produce high-pitched or low-pitched sounds.

That's how animals are able to growl, meow, chirp, bark, or screech.



But when sounds from the throat get into the human mouth, they are shaped by the movement of our tongue and lips. *Try to say the alphabet without moving your tongue or lips!*

Through millions of years, human features have changed (and improved) to better shape sounds along the way. Human mouths started getting smaller and our necks grew longer. The lower jaw became smaller and more flexible for movement. The tongue was pushed inside the throat, making the larynx move lower. Since more space was now required for the tongue and larynx, the neck became longer. No other animals have the flexibility of their tongue, vocal chords, lips and jaw to produce complex sounds that make up human language. Those sounds make words, and the human brain can put those words in order, to give meaning to what we're saying.

Some animals, like the parrot, can imitate human speech, but they cannot put words together to verbally communicate with each other, or with us.

Animal Communication

THINK ABOUT THIS

Can you communicate without using your voice, or without using any words? Traffic lights communicate with just two **colors:** **RED** means **STOP** and **GREEN** means **GO**.

In the seven boxes (here and on the next page), draw a **simple picture** to represent a word. Cut the boxes out. Let your family know that you are using only the 7 pictures to communicate. See how long you can go without using your voice. ***No talking!***

Animal Communication

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