Colorado Life Zone Scavenger Hunt

Below are worksheets created for all the habitats or life zones. They were designed with the intention of breaking the class up into small groups, and having students research about general information and one life zone. They would then come back and share their information with the rest of the class in the form of an oral presentation, poster, or powerpoint slideshow.

The many pictures and links in the web page can make it very distracting for the kids, and the kids may skip reading the paragraphs. Most of the questions come directly from the text and encourage the kids to read the information in the paragraphs.

For an assessment at the end, I have had kids get in small groups for a whole class trivia game activity. The group or groups that got the most questions correct received a small reward or prize. The trivia game motivated them to stay more focused while researching the questions on the worksheets and listening to their classmates present their information.

I realize there is no answer key provided. It would be very easy for the kids to just click on the answer key link and get the answers without doing the work.

If you see any incorrect information in the website, please e-mail me at sgregers@mesa.k12.co.us, and I will correct it as quick as possible.
**General Information**

What are the three major landforms in Colorado and what part of the state are they located (ex: eastern part of state)?

Landform 1: ____________   Location: _______________
Landform 2: ____________   Location: _______________
Landform 3: ____________   Location: _______________

Define Life Zones:_____________________________________________________

**Elevation and Climate**

Define elevation: ______________________________________________________

Define climate: _______________________________________________________

The higher in elevation you go, usually the ___________ the temperature gets.

Name three different forms of precipitation:
  a. ____________________  b. ____________________  
  c. ____________________

The higher in elevation you go, usually the ________ precipitation falls there.

As you get higher in elevation there are ______________ bouncing off one another in the air. This makes it easier to get out of breathe up there because there is ______________ for you to breathe.

What is altitude sickness?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What are some symptoms of altitude sickness and how do you get better?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
It is much easier to get sunburnt when you are up in the alpine or subalpine lifezones because there is ____________ to block the ____________, plus the snow ____________ the light back up.

**Seasons**
Why is the snow that falls high in the Rocky Mountains so important for Colorado and the rest of the southwestern U.S?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

The changing seasons often force animals to move up or down in elevation in order to find ____________, ____________, and ____________ from the weather.

**Adaptations: Plants and Animals**
Give an example of a deciduous tree and tell me why it is deciduous?
Name of tree: _______________
Why?_______________________________________________________________

Give an example of a coniferous tree and tell me why it is coniferous?
Name of tree: _______________
Why?_______________________________________________________________

Give an example of succulent plant and tell me why it is a succulent?
Name of plant: _______________
Why?_______________________________________________________________

List 3 animal and their adaptations to their environment
animal 1: _______ Adaptation: ___________________
animal 2: _______ Adaptation: ___________________
animal 3: _______ Adaptation: ___________________

Look through the website. List at least four animals that are adapted to 3 or more habitats.
_______________________________________, ___________________________________, ____________________________,
Semidesert Shrublands & Desert Canyonlands
What is its elevation range? __________________________

The semidesert shrublands are on the ____________ (Colorado Plateau Region) and _______________ (San Luis Valley) parts of the state.

Name 4 important rivers that cross the semidesert shrublands:
______________, ________________, ________________, ____________

Temperatures may get pretty hot during the day in the summer, ____ degrees F and higher. However, at night the desert may cool down by ____ degrees F.

It is important to watch for stormy weather when hiking in the desert canyonlands because of the possible danger of ________________.

Name 3 ways how plants have adapted to living in the semidesert shrublands.
___________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

You will find many reptiles like __________and __________ here. For much of the year, it is ______________for them to stay active.

In order to stay cool and save water in the summer, most animals in the semidesert shrublands are most active during what parts of the day? ___________. ___________, ___________

Animals need to get much of their water from the _________ they eat.

The many steep canyons and mesas in the desert canyonlands provide the perfect place for birds of prey. Nests on steep cliffs make difficult for other _________to get to their ________, and make it easy to ___________ from.

One bird of prey who does not live on cliffs is the _____________________. They hide in the burrows and tunnels created by _______________ colonies. They eat them and __________ their homes.
Great Plains

What is the elevation range of the plains? __________________________

The plains or grasslands take up about _____ percent of the land in Colorado.

Early explorers called the Great Plains the ________________ because of the extreme temperatures, little rainfall, and the lack of trees.

When it does rain or snow on the plains, it is often in the form of large ___________ or ___________. The dangers of the storms include ___________, ___________, ___________, ___________, ___________, and possible _____________.

Playa lakes form in ________________ from snowmelt or large rainstorms.

Humans need to irrigate or take water from __________, __________, or ________________ in order to survive and farm on the grasslands.

Most of the rolling hills of the plains are covered with short grasses, like ____________ and ____________. You will also find ____________ and ________________. In years when it snows more in the winter and rains more in the spring, lots of ________________ may grow. Only by riparian areas (lakes, ponds, or rivers) will you find ________________, ________________, and other trees and shrubs.

You will find many reptiles like __________ and __________ in the plains. For much of the year, the plains are ________________ for them to stay active.

Most animals have adapted to the plains by either:

__________________________________________________________________________

Enormous herds of ______ used to roam the plains until the invention of ____________ and __________. They were killed for their _______ and to prevent ____________________.
Foothills Woodlands and Shrublands

What is the elevation range of the foothills? __________________________

The lower part of the foothills on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains is the __________________________. The lower part of the foothills on the western and south central parts of the state is the__________________________. Higher in the foothills is the __________________________.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to figure out what habitat or life zone you are in. As you go up in elevation, the plants and trees of two different habitats or life zones may __________________________.

In the montane shrublands, thick patches of __________ take over the hillsides.

Pinyon trees, ponderosa trees, and oak brush make __________, __________, __________ in order to reproduce. They are also important food sources for animals.

Most species of reptiles and amphibians live at or below the ______________ life zone.

Many larger grazing animals like __________ and __________ migrate down to the foothills in the winter and go to the higher life zones from late spring to fall. The lower parts of the foothills may be quite ______ and ______ during the summer.

Name three smaller animals that commonly stay in the foothills even during the hottest parts of the summer. ____________, ____________, __________

Birds, like the ____________ and ____________, have adapted to eat berries, seeds, and insects. They can stay in the foothills all year round.

Name three different birds of prey that live in the foothills.

_______________, ___________________ , ___________________
Montane Forests
What is the elevation range of the montane forests? ____________________

When the plains and deserts are roasting with temperatures above 100 degrees F, the high temperatures in the montane can be in the _______ and _______.

Enough rain and snow falls here to support large forests of _________ trees and ________ trees.

It is possible to find _______ in the shadows of trees on northern facing slopes well into the summer.

__________ plays an important role in clearing dense older forests, allowing new healthy forests to grow.

The deep winter snows, shorter montane summers, and cooler temperatures can make it difficult for __________ creatures to survive. So, few species of reptiles and amphibians live there.

All animals must put on a lot of ________ and ______ in the summer to survive the cold snowy winter.

How have these animals adapted to the snowy montane forests, subalpine, and alpine winters
Mule Deer: ________________________________
Canada Lynx: ________________________________
Snowshoe Hare: ________________________________
American bear: ________________________________
Pine Squirrel: ________________________________

The montane forests can be an important habitat for birds __________ north and south through the seasons.

Why does the gray wolf have a ? by its name? (Check out CO Div of wildlife link to find the answer.) ________________________________
**Subalpine**

What is the elevation range of the subalpine? _________________________

As you climb up from the montane to the subalpine, _________ trees from the montane forests disappear and you get in scattered forests of large _________ trees.

The upper edge of the subalpine is the ________________.

The pine trees produce ___________ to create new trees. They are also an important food source for many birds and mammals.

Odds are people and animals die of _________________ before they die of ____________ when trapped in an avalanche.

Snow blindness is where the vast amounts of bright white ______ causes your eyes to ______. Soon it is hard to tell __________ and _____________.
It makes it easy to _____________ and/or ______ _____________.

In the summer, the open meadows fill in quickly with _________ and bright beautiful _____________.

The bristlecone pine is one of the ___________trees on the planet. Some may be __________ of years old.

What are 3 ways that mammals have adapted to the subalpine winter?
________________________________, ________________________, _______________________

The _____________ and ______________ are so secretive and the subalpine is so high and rugged that we don’t know if they exist in Colorado today.

When the snow and cold weather returns to the subalpine, most birds fly _________ or to a __________________. Yet, some birds have adapted to living through the winter, name 3 of them: ____________, _____________, ____________
Alpine

What is the elevation range of the alpine life zone? ___________________

The alpine life zone is so cold and windy that it is above tree line. What does “above tree line” mean?
______________________________

The major landform here is the ________________ (a series of tall mountains that zigzags north-south through central part of Colorado). It splits the way water flows in the United States. Everything east of the tall chain of mountains flows to the _________ and everything west flows ________.

Weather up here is really __________, __________, and __________. The weather can change from __________ and __________ to __________ really fast!

In the alpine, you have a lot higher chance of getting struck by __________ since you may be the tallest object and you are so close to the clouds.

List at least 4 other dangers when hiking in the alpine:
____________________, __________________, __________________, __________________

Only _________________ grow in the alpine during very short summer (early July to early September).

The summer is so short and the temperatures stay cold enough so that no cold-blooded __________ or __________ can usually live there.

Most animals in the alpine only live in the alpine during the ____________________.

There are only a few animals that can live there most of the year. Name at least three mammals and one bird:
____________________, __________________, __________________, __________________
Riparian
Colorado's greatest natural resource is not gold, silver, coal, or natural gas. It is ________.

Without the snow melt from the Rocky Mountains, many different ________ and ________ could not live here, including ____________.

What are the 4 different types of riparian habitats?
________________, ______________, ______________, ______________

In the lower elevations, like the semidesert shrublands and plains, ________ create important green stretches of land or corridors across an often dry landscape.

What two non-native trees were planted by the rivers that are now wrecking many riparian habitats? ________________, ________________

What animal helps provide important habitats for moose and other animals, helps keep the streams clear, and prevents too much erosion? ________________

In the alpine, snow melt often pools into crystal clear __________, and then forms into __________ that flow down the mountainside.

Beavers, muskrats, and other animals create a ________________ to rub on their fur to keep it waterproof and the animal warm while swimming.

Name at least 4 other animals that live by the waters edge eating plants, insects, or other animals: __________, __________, __________, __________

How have these birds adapted to living in or by the water
Whooping crane:_____________________________________________________
Sandpiper: _________________________________________________________
Canada geese: ______________________________________________________
Bald Eagle: _________________________________________________________
American Dipper: ___________________________________________________