Instructional Unit Title: Staying Alive!

The teacher may introduce the concept of organisms so students can begin to examine how various organisms interact in their environment.



The teacher may provide various examples of organisms (e.g. humans, animals, plants) and non-living objects (e.g. rocks, buildings, playground) so students can begin to make distinctions between living and non-living organisms



The teacher may pose the question, "What do organisms need to survive?" so students can begin to hypothesize what physical characteristics (e.g. fur, claws, beaks, fins, teeth) and behaviors (e.g. camouflage, running, hopping, flying, hunting) are necessary for survival.



The teacher may discuss why needs (e.g. food, water, shelter) are important for survival so students can explore the most common types of needs of organisms (e.g. humans, plants and animals).



The teacher may provide examples of decision-making models, so students can begin to make decisions about content of sugar in foods and beverages they consume



The teacher may provide examples of healthy vs. unhealthy foods so students can begin to make decisions about their own eating habits.



The teacher may introduce the essential food groups for human needs (USDA My Plate) so students can explore a variety of foods they consume from each food group.



The teacher may provide examples of human needs so students can make connections to their own essential needs.



The teacher may provide opportunities for students to examine animals and humans in optimal and non-optimal environmental situations so students can draw conclusions about the impact if resources were scarce



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: A developer has proposed to build a new dam on your local river to generate electricity for the community. This dam will have an impact on the surrounding environmental systems, both locally and regionally. You will present to the city council at a town hall meeting in one of the following roles: biologist, concerned citizen, mayor, representative of the electric company, or developer. You will research your position (for or against) in order to identify the ecological and economic impacts of the dam on humans, plants, animals, and the habitats along the river system. Your presentation should include a speech and visual aids (e.g., maps, graphs, charts, pictures) on whether or not the dam should be built.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.