

MARY POPE OSBORNE

MAGIC TREE HOUSE®

#39 WINDY NIGHT WITH WILD HORSES

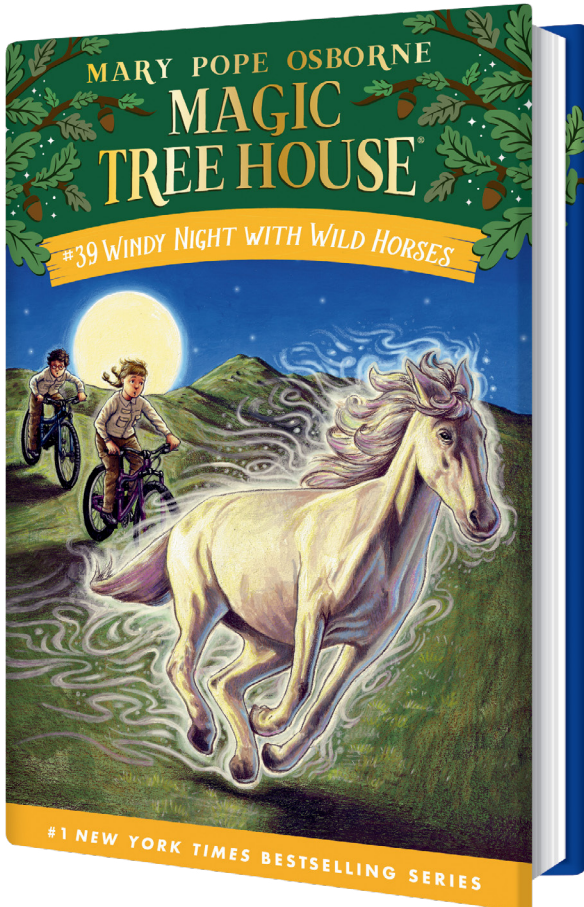


EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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WINDY NIGHT WITH WILD HORSES



About the Book

The #1 bestselling Magic Tree House® series for chapter book readers is ready to whisk you away across the world with Jack and Annie—this time to Mongolia!

The wind starts to blow . . . and a new magical journey unfolds. When the tree house lands in Mongolia, Jack and Annie can hear the drumbeat of horses' hooves. The little horses, or takhi, of Mongolia are recovering from near extinction, and the kids get to meet the people who take care of them. But the horses are still in danger with wolves nearby. . . . Can Jack and Annie protect the last of the little horses?



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About the Author

MARY POPE OSBORNE is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling Magic Tree House® series, as well as coauthor of the Magic Tree House® Fact Tracker series along with her husband, Will; her sister, Natalie Pope Boyce; and her good friend Jenny Laird.



About the Illustrator

AG FORD is a *New York Times* bestselling children's book illustrator and recipient of two NAACP Image Awards. He grew up in Dallas with his mom, dad, two sisters, and one brother. He majored in illustration at Columbus College of Art & Design, and now lives with his family in Frisco, Texas. Visit him at agfordillustration.com.

DESTINATION: MONGOLIA

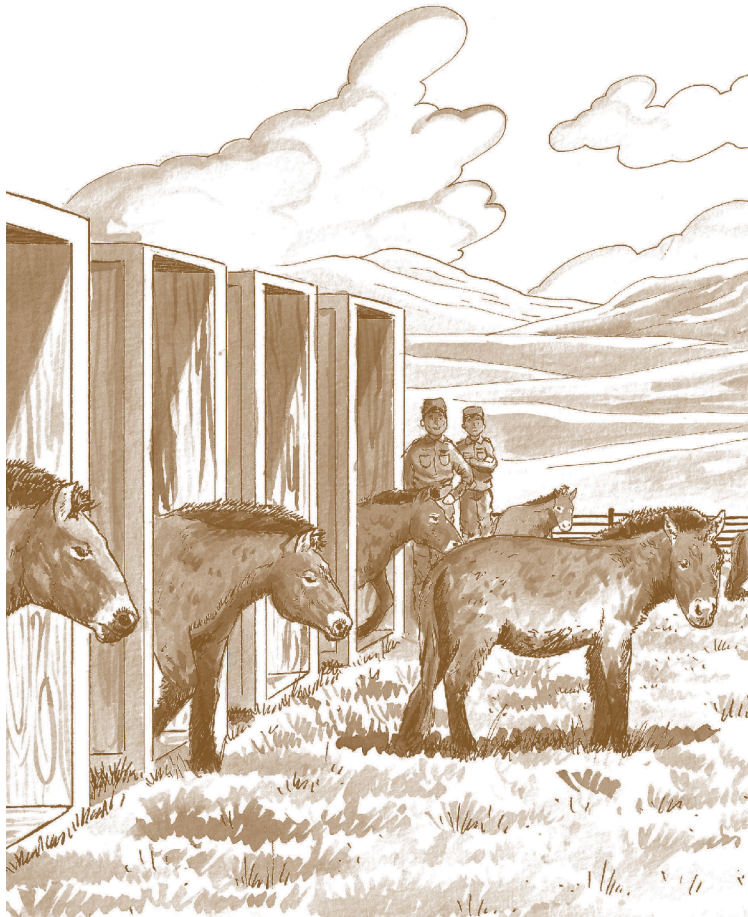
The magic tree house transports Jack and Annie all the way to Mongolia, a country bordered by Russia to the north and China to the south.

As a class, locate Mongolia on a map or a globe. Then conduct research about the country and its people.

Information to research can include:

- History
- Culture
- Music and dance
- Diet
- Shelter
- Climate
- Geography
- Economy

Students should gather photographs, maps, and any other visuals they come across and display them, along with their research, in a poster or other visual presentation.



Extensions or Scaffolds

- Have students locate their own city on the map or globe and mark it with a dot sticker or a pin. Then place another marker on Ulaanbaatar, the largest city in Mongolia. Connect the two markers with string and calculate the distance between them. What is the time difference between the two cities? How long would it take to get from one to the other, considering students cannot travel by magic tree house?
- Have students imagine that for six months they will live with Mongolian nomads. Their hosts, like Tuya's family, herd livestock from horseback and live in yurts. Their luggage should not exceed thirty pounds. In small groups, create a realistic list of items that they will pack, being sure to note the approximate weight of each item. They should also consider Mongolia's climate and culture as they compile their lists.
- Using visuals gathered in their research, students can create a large postcard of an imaginary trip to Mongolia. They should illustrate one side and include a note to a best friend or family member on the other side. Encourage the use of descriptive language so that the person who receives the postcard can imagine the trip. Then display the postcards on a bulletin board, along with a map of Mongolia and any other additional visuals collected during research.

Resources

Kids Britannica Article: ["Mongolia"](#)

CIA World Factbook Entry: ["Mongolia"](#)

National Geographic Article: ["Mongolia"](#)



NOMADS AND THE NOMADIC LIFESTYLE

For thousands of years, Mongolians have lived as nomads, traveling from place to place to find fresh grass and water for their animals. In fact, nearly half the country still lives that way, including Tuya and her family, who Jack and Annie meet on their eco-volunteer adventure.

Nomads set up camps and sleep in huts called yurts, or gers, in each new location.

A yurt is a round, moveable home. It is made using a wooden frame covered in white felt material which is usually made from sheep's wool. It is strong and keeps everything and everyone warm and dry inside.

The yurt is considered the center of the universe—its round shape represents the sky, and the pillars symbolize the connection between earth and heaven. Doors on yurts are colorfully decorated and always face south towards the warming sun. Inside, carpets line the floor and in the center is a fire pit.

As a class, research photos of Mongolian yurts and look at them closely.

- What do you notice? What do you see?
- What words would you use to describe the yurt?

Challenge students to create their own mini yurt using the [Mongolian Yurt Activity Pack](#) from Indiana University.

You will need:

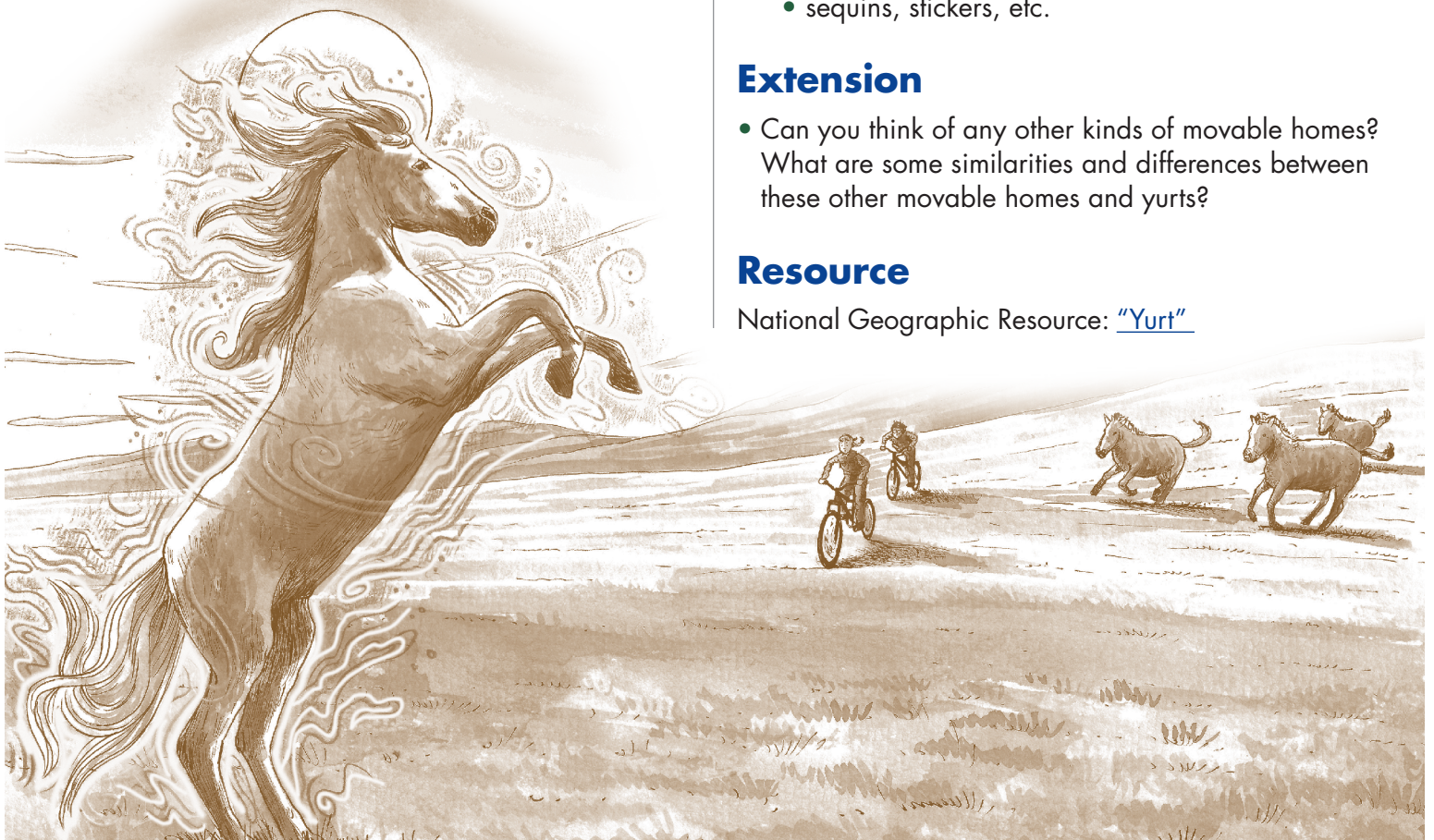
- the downloadable activity pack as a guide
- a printer
- plain construction paper
- crayons/markers/colored pencils
- scissors
- glue sticks
- sequins, stickers, etc.

Extension

- Can you think of any other kinds of movable homes? What are some similarities and differences between these other movable homes and yurts?

Resource

National Geographic Resource: ["Yurt"](#)



ANIMALS OF MONGOLIA RESEARCH PROJECT

Marmots, red deer, gazelles, and wolves are mentioned in *Magic Tree House: Windy Night with Wild Horses*. But there are many other animals—over 139 mammal species, 448 bird species, 76 fish species, 22 reptile species, and 6 amphibian species—that call Mongolia home.

Assign each student or pair of students an animal from the list below to research on the internet.

- Saiga antelope
- Bactrian camel
- Saker falcon
- Eurasian lynx
- Sable
- Tarbagan marmot
- Corsac fox
- Siberian taimen
- Long-eared jerboa
- Mongolian gerbil
- Eurasian beaver

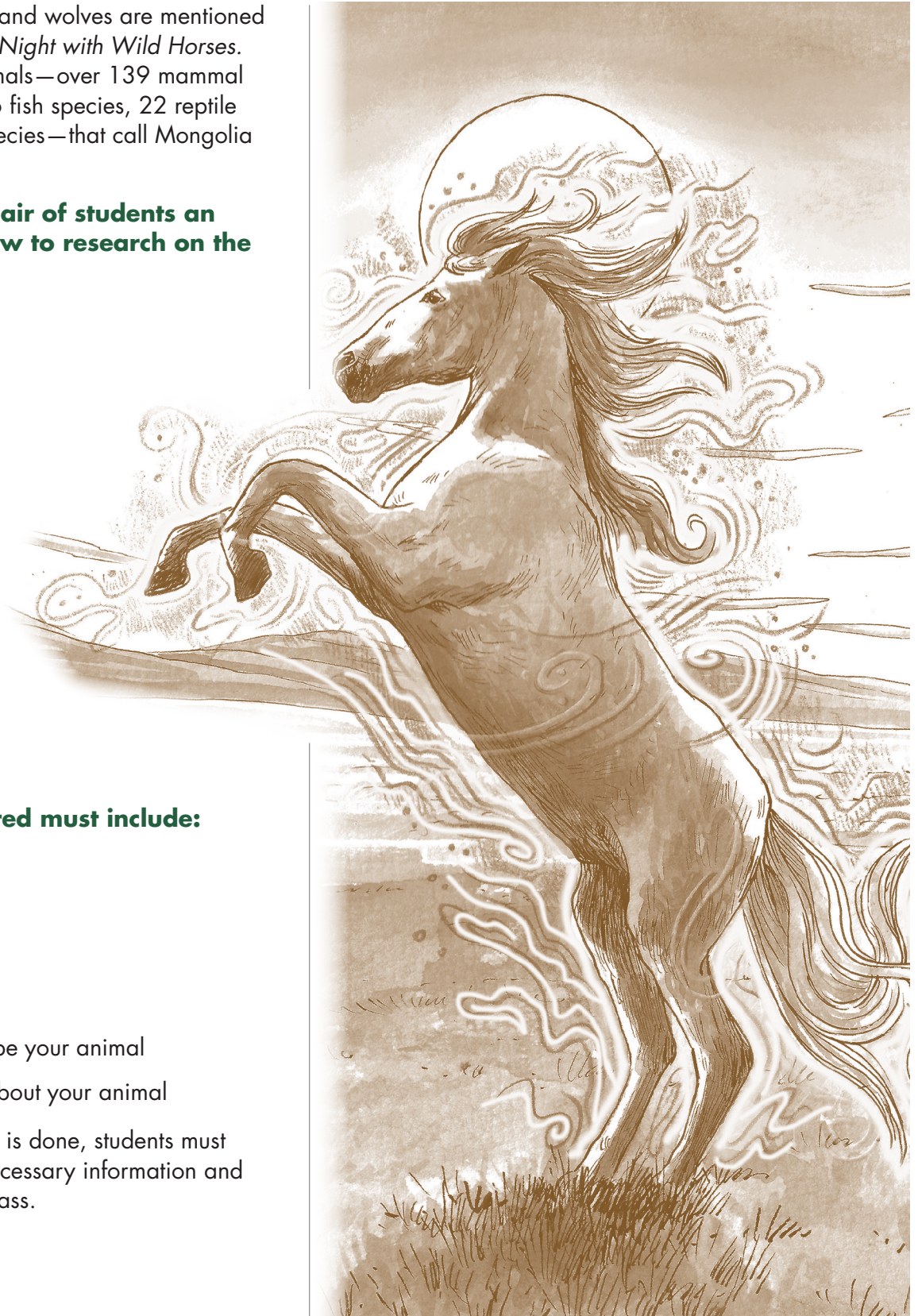
Information to be gathered must include:

- Type of animal
- What it eats
- Where it lives
- A picture
- Three words that describe your animal
- Three interesting facts about your animal

Once all the needed research is done, students must create a poster with all the necessary information and present their findings to the class.

Resource

["Animals of Mongolia"](#)



THREATENED, ENDANGERED, OR EXTINCT?

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has very specific qualifications to categorize animals as either threatened, endangered, or extinct.

As a class, discuss what each conservation status means:

Threatened: In danger of becoming endangered

Endangered: In danger of becoming extinct

Extinct: No longer existing either in the wild or at all

Have students warm up their library skills by researching the specifics of each one of these statuses:

- What are the numbers of population that place a species in a certain category?
- How many animals are listed in each status worldwide?
- What are common reasons for threatened, endangered, or extinct species?

Provide each student, or small group of students, with a piece of paper each with a different animal written on it.

Black rhino	Pangolin
Bald eagle	Cross River gorilla
Amur leopard	Sea lion
Sumatran orangutan	Giant panda
Narwhal	Jaguar
Giant tortoise	Great white shark
Polar bear	Chimpanzee
Sumatran elephant	Bluefin tuna
Galápagos penguin	Bengal tiger
Black-footed ferret	Tasmanian tiger
Pyrenean ibex	Passenger pigeon
Dodo bird	Sea mink

Once they have been assigned an animal, students will research in the library to find out every fact they can about the conservation status of this animal and reasons for this classification (being sure to note the sources of each piece of information). Students should share their findings with the class.

Extension

- Watch videos of endangered animals online or visit them in the zoo. Learn how the animal is cared for in captivity.
- Try mirroring the animal's body language. Students can play a game of Endangered Charades, trying to guess which animal they are pretending to be.
- Read the Magic Tree House® Fact Tracker *Pandas and Other Endangered Species* [to learn more about endangered animals](#).

Resources

World Wildlife Fund: ["About Species"](#)

National Geographic: ["How do we decide which species are endangered or threatened?"](#)

National Geographic: ["Endangered Species"](#)

Britannica: ["What Makes a Species Endangered"](#)



SAVING THE TAKHI HORSE FROM EXTINCTION

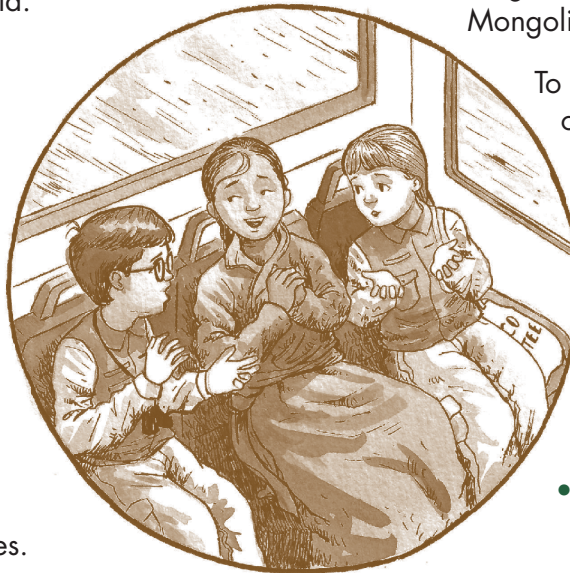
The takhi horse is a wild species that cannot be tamed. They lived on the plains of Mongolia for almost 200,000 years and are, as Tuya tells Jack and Annie, "a big part of the history, in folktales and legends."

However, the climate of Mongolia can be harsh and the population of the takhi decreased significantly over time due to hunting, diseases, and drought.

Thanks to conservation efforts by zoos, a small number have survived, the population has increased, and many have been released back into the wild.

About takhi horses

- They are more stocky and shorter than domesticated horses.
- They are the only wild horses in the world that are not descendants from previously domesticated horses (most wild horses come from domesticated horses that were set free or escaped).
- They live in herds that consist of one male and several female horses.
- They may live to be up to thirty-six years old.
- Captive breeding programs that began in zoos have revived the takhi horse population.
- By the 1990s, there were over 1,500 takhi horses in the world.
- Approximately 300 horses have been reintroduced to their native homeland of Mongolia.



Umbrella Species

The takhi horses are considered an "umbrella species."

An umbrella species is usually chosen by conservationists to make ecosystem management strategies easier in areas where there are a large number of species of concern. By protecting the habitat of an umbrella species, we indirectly protect all the wildlife that lives in that area.

Ask your students, how they think protecting the takhi horses might help protect other species that live in Mongolia?

To better understand umbrella species, ask one student to volunteer to hold an umbrella. A few other students should stand under the umbrella.

Have another student put on a baseball cap and stand nearby, but not under the umbrella.

- How many students are protected by the baseball hat?
- How many students are protected by the umbrella?
- Which provides more protection? The hat or the umbrella?

Extensions

- Draw an umbrella. Draw a takhi horse inside the umbrella. Next draw all the other animals that share the same home and are protected under this umbrella.
- Watch this PBS video: ["How Horses Went from Food to Friends."](#) Ask students to write down what they wonder as they watch. Then pick two questions and model researching these for the class.

Resources

["Tracing Takhi on the Steppe"](#)

["A Future for the Wild Horse"](#)

ASK AN EXPERT

Many zoos are using conservation efforts to save critically endangered species throughout the world.

Invite an animal conservationist or zoologist to your classroom (or for a video visit). Discuss endangered, threatened, and extinct animals and the conservation efforts in place to help. Plus, learn ways we can all make a difference.

Have students draft questions that they have and provide them to the special guest ahead of time.

During the visit, students should practice taking notes and creating follow-up questions.

After the visit, students should draft a written report and present what they learned about animal conservation and the steps we can take to make a difference.

For help in finding an expert, check with your local zoo or contact one of the following animal conservation organizations:

[Defenders of Wildlife](#)

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

[World Wildlife Fund](#)

[Natural Resources Defense Council](#)

[The Sierra Club](#)

Extension

- Jack is concerned about the safety of the takhi in the wild where wolves can prey on them. He wonders if it is really better for them to leave the safety of the zoos. However, Tuya explains that while "the price for living a natural life in the wild can be danger, sometimes freedom is more important than total safety." As a class, discuss the idea of freedom vs. safety.

Resources

["The Conservation Mission of Zoos"](#)

["A new study spotlights the vital role of zoos in conservation"](#)

["Conservation"](#)

["Zoos and Endangered Species Conservation"](#)



THE MYTH OF THE WIND HORSE

Throughout Mongolia, the myth of the wind horse has been shared for centuries. The wind horse has the strength and courage of a horse and the speed of the wind. When he appears, it is a sign of good fortune. It is believed that the wind horse will carry the wishes of people using the wind.

When Jack and Annie bike out to the plain to rescue the escaped takhi, a beautiful white stallion joined to help them in bringing the horses to safety. Engage students in a discussion of this white stallion and how it helped Jack and Annie.

- Explain how Jack and Annie summoned the white stallion in your own words.

- How did the wind horse bring good fortune?
- Draw a picture of what you think the wind horse looks like.

Extension

- Several cultures engage in customs that entail wish-granting or good fortune, such as blowing out the candles on a birthday cake, praying, seeing a shooting star at night, tossing a coin into a wishing well or fountain, breaking the wishbone of a cooked turkey, blowing a dandelion, or writing wishes on a ribbon or a sky lantern. Have students write own their story in which one of these wish-granting traditions helps when they need it most.

BE AN ECO-VOLUNTEER IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Even without traveling around the world in a magic tree house, your students can be eco-volunteers!

We all live in incredibly rich ecosystems, whether we're aware of the environmental diversity around us or not. Even in the largest cities you can find sparrows surviving on seeds, bees circling around flowers, and squirrels snacking on berries, all participating in the same network of energy, codependence, and survival.

To survive in its ecosystem, an animal needs five things.

- Food
- Shelter
- Place to raise young
- Water
- Air

If the animal's needs cannot be met, they relocate to another area. For example, if deforestation (removal of trees) occurs, a bird may relocate to another forest. When habitats become scarce (such as forests), animals risk becoming endangered.

- Study the ecosystem of your own neighborhood.
- What kind of living creatures do you see?
- How do the living things in this habitat find their food?
- What types of animal homes are found in this habitat?
- How can you show respect for the natural environment?

Extensions

- Lead a discussion about the students' habitats and what items in their homes or neighborhoods support the good health and well-being of their families. Have each student create a drawing or model of their own habitat.

Resources

["Conservation for Kids"](#) from the Center for Biological Diversity

["Conservation for Kids"](#) from Peaks to People Water Fund



This guide was created by Marcie Colleen

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