



Animal Observer

You can learn a lot by watching animals. For instance, you might spot horses and cows sleeping...while standing up! Or maybe you could see an owl turning its head backward. If you look *really* closely, you might see that bats have teeny-tiny belly buttons. What else can you learn by watching? Let's find out!

Steps

1. Be an animal observer
2. Play an animal observation game
3. Focus on one animal

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know more about observing animals.





Step 1: Be an animal observer



When scientists observe, they use their senses to learn things. They may use their eyes to watch. Ears to listen. Nose to smell. Hands to touch. In this step, put your senses to work as you observe animals!



Choices—do one:



Find animal tracks outdoors. After it rains, look for prints in a muddy or sandy area. You might find a cat's paw prints, or a bird's tiny footprints. Take a photo or draw what you find. If you can't get outside, draw any animal prints you like. Then ask your friends or family to guess what made each set of prints. Could the dog print be a wolf or coyote? Could the cat print be a lion or tiger?



► **For more fun:** Bring a ruler and have an adult help you measure the prints you find. How long and wide is each print? How much space is between the prints? This measurement can tell you how fast an animal was moving. When an animal runs, the prints are farther apart.



Respect wildlife:

Never disturb creatures in their homes. Always give them their space.

Explore where animals live and the sounds they make.

A habitat is a place where animals live. In their habitats, animals also make different sounds to communicate. Look at the “Animal Habitats” box. With an adult's help, find a video with animals in their

habitat. First, watch the video. Then, if you can, close your eyes and listen to it. Can you guess which animals you're hearing? Draw the animals you saw or heard. If you can, go outdoors and listen to animal sounds near your home, school, or meeting place. What do you hear?

Animal Habitats

Forest



Look for: Owls, deer, eagles, opossums, raccoons, foxes, squirrels, rabbits

Ocean



Look for: Whales, fish, sharks, rays, eels, seahorses

Rainforest



Look for: Tigers, monkeys, sloths, caimans, turtles, insects

Desert



Look for: Lizards, foxes, jackrabbits, camels, snakes

Polar



Look for: Polar bears, snowy owls, penguins, seals, walruses

City



Look for: Squirrels, pigeons, mice, dogs, cats

Step 2: Play an animal observation game



Animals are amazing! They can do cool things like change colors, fly, swim, run fast, and make loud sounds. Find out more about animals by playing one of these fun games!

Camouflage Hide and Seek

With help from an adult, find an indoor or outdoor space where you can play hide and seek. Stand, sit, or lie down in front of a place that is the closest match to what you're wearing. Then let the adult try to find you. Ask the adult if it was easy or hard to spot you. What would you do to camouflage yourself in nature? Would you wear all green or brown? Or wear white on a snowy day?



Choices—do one:

Play camouflage hide and seek. Some animals use camouflage to hide or disguise themselves. This makes them harder to find and helps protect them. They may match their background, like how an owl can blend into the tree it sits in. Or they may have patterns, like a zebra's black and white stripes, which make the animal hard to see in the shadows of tall grass. Play a game of hide and seek using these same tricks!

Play animal charades.

Charades is a guessing game you play with a group. With

friends or family, write or draw pictures of different animals on separate pieces of paper. Fold the papers and put them in a container. Then take turns picking a paper and acting like the animal, without talking! You can act out things like a cat licking its paws, a kangaroo hopping, or a snake sliding through the grass. If the group can't guess, make the sound the animal makes.

Spot It? Got It!

Test your animal observer skills the next time you see these animals in a picture or in person!

Squirrel



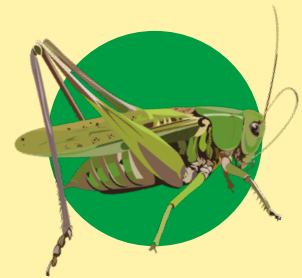
A brown squirrel blends with a brown tree.

Snake



A spotted snake blends with fallen leaves.

Grasshopper



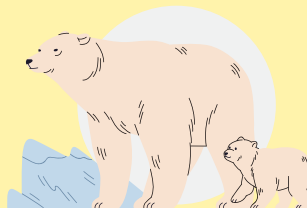
A green grasshopper blends with green grass.

Leopard



A spotted leopard blends with sun and shade patterns.

Polar Bear



A white polar bear blends with white snow.

Deer



A brown deer blends with fall colors.

Step 3: Focus on one animal

Pick one animal from the “Animal Habitats” box on page 3 to explore or choose another favorite animal you want to know more about. You may be able to observe the animal in person, such as at a zoo, farm, or park. Or you can have an adult help you find books to look at and videos to watch.



Choices—do one:

Record field notes like a scientist. Scientists watch animals and write down what they observe. This is called making “field notes.” Learn about your animal. Make your own field notes by writing about or drawing about it.

Draw and share fun animal facts. Find two or three fun facts about your animal and draw it in a picture. For example, some animals live underground during the day and come out at night to look for food. Other animals might bark like a dog but aren’t really dogs! Show your picture to a friend or family member and share the fun facts you learned.



Animal Field Notes



I am called: _____

What I look like: _____

What I eat: _____

Where I live: _____

Where I sleep: _____



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