FIELD OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

1. Background Research

Optimum as a class work or homework assignment to prepare for the Safari Explorers program.

Objective: Students will use their library and media center skills to conduct research on a given animal.

Materials:
2) Books, magazines, Internet access, CD-ROM programs, and videos that could aid in the research efforts. Students can also search the Lion Country Safari web site at www.lioncountrysafari.com

Procedure:
1) Have students select an animal they would like to research from the “List of Study Animals.” Students should begin researching information about their species. Although students may not collect behavioral data on the animal that they research, they will probably have the opportunity to briefly observe the animal at Lion Country Safari.

2) Distribute a copy of the “Animal Facts” worksheet to each student.

3) Students should gather information about their animal from a reliable source to complete the Fact Sheet. Additional information may be gathered during the trip to Lion Country Safari.

4) Students should note the sources in the “Reference” section on the fact sheet. Helpful information on sources and writing references follows the worksheet.
## ANIMAL FACTS

| **Common Name** | ____________________________ |
| **Taxonomy**    | ____________________________ |
|                | Order ______________________ |
|                | Family _____________________ |
|                | Genus _____________________  |
|                | Species ___________________  |

### Characteristics

__________________________________________________________________
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### Range

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### Habitat

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### Wild Diet

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### Zoo Diet

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### Lifespan

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### Reproduction

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gestation</td>
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<td>Social Behavior</td>
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<td>Zoo Habitat</td>
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<td>Endangerment</td>
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<td>Conservation</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Vocabulary Questions

My animal is a:

_____ A. Mammal
_____ B. Amphibian
_____ C. Bird
_____ D. Reptile

It is active during the _______ (day, twilight hours, or night), therefore it is:

_____ A. Diurnal
_____ B. Crepuscular
_____ C. Nocturnal

The food it eats makes it a:

_____ A. Decomposer
_____ B. Prey
_____ C. Predator
_____ D. Scavenger
LIST OF ANIMALS

African Lion
Aldabra Tortoise
Asiatic Water Buffalo
Blackbuck
Brown Pelican
Chimpanzee
Eland
Gemsbok
Giraffe
Greater Kudu
Nile Lechwe
Nilgai
Ostrich
Plains Zebra
Siamang
South American Tapir
Southern White Rhinoceros
Waterbuck
White-handed Gibbon
Wildebeest (Gnu)
BACKGROUND RESEARCH & REFERENCES

General encyclopedias, such as World Book and Grolier’s, provide basic information about the well-known animals. It is a good idea to restrict students to one encyclopedia source, in order to encourage them to search out specific references.

Much has been written about certain species, such as the chimpanzee or the elephant. However, it will be a considerable challenge and sometimes frustrating to the students to find enough background information about certain species, such as the Greater Kudu. The following sources have proven to be invaluable in all cases, but especially for those species about which little is known and less has been written. It is worth the effort to make these resources available to students through the school or local public library.

   (This source is written in 5 volumes, and is considered by researchers to be one of the most exhaustive. The citations are somewhat complex and obscure for young students, and it can be difficult to locate, but every species can be found).

   (The source is in 24 slim volumes plus an index. It is also very comprehensive, and less difficult for students to use. They may need guidance understanding the citations in the index. This is also an excellent reference).

   (This two-volume set is an excellent resource though somewhat complex).

   (This source is published for the British Ornithologists’ Union and contains bibliographies. It is useful as an alternative source).

   (Useful for bird researchers only.)


   (This is not an exhaustive source but has excellent information about animal behaviors and contains several well-developed ethograms).
RESOURCE INFORMATION

African Elephant
www.oaklandzoo.org
www.hoglezoo.org

African Lion
www.rollinghillswildlife.com
www.cincyzoo.org

Aldabra Tortoise
www.rollinghillswildlife.com
www.honoluluzoo.org

Asiatic Water Buffalo
www.hillezoo.com
www.scz.org

Blackbuck
www.fossilrim.org
www.sfzoo.org

Chimpanzee
www.awf.org
www.janegoodall.org/

Eland
www.awf.org/wildlives
www.oaklandzoo.org

Gemsbok
www.nczoo.org
www.sa­venues.com

Giraffe
www.hoglezoo.org
www.stlzoo.org

Greater Kudu
www.sfzoo.org
www.awf.org

Nile Lechwe
www.ultimateungulate.com
www.nczoo.org

Nilgai
www.lowryparkzoo.com
www.tsha.utexas.edu

Ostrich
www.seaworld.org
www.stlzoo.org

Plains Zebra
www.oaklandzoo.org
www.awf.org/wildlives

Siamang
www.oaklandzoo.org
www.oregonzoo.org

Southern White Rhinoceros
www.seaworld.org
www.rollinghillswildlife.com

Waterbuck
www.awf.org/wildlives
www.hoglezoo.org

White-handed Gibbon
www.pueblozoo.org
www.colszoo.org

Wildebeest (Gnu)
www.kidszoo.org
www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org

At www.lioncountrysafari.com, animal facts and links to other sites are listed in “Tour the Preserve.”

At www.birminghamzoo.com/ao/, there is an Animal Omnibus List that has a great deal of animal information. It links you to specific sites with information about your animal.

CD-ROMs that can be purchased
Wide World of Animals, Version 1 (Creative Wonders)
The Animals! (San Diego Zoo Presents)
MODEL BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRIES


Information Board: “Tigers.” Information Board: Tiger Habitat. Zoo Atlanta, GA.


Web Site: “Basic Biology of Lemurs.” www.duke.edu/web/primate/bascbiol.htm1
2. Developing an Ethogram

Objective:
To have students analyze the process for developing an ethogram.

Materials:
1) pens/ pencils
2) clock/ stopwatch
3) notepad/ paper
4) ethogram worksheet

Time Frame:
30 minutes
This is a great homework assignment for students preparing for the Field Observation program.

Vocabulary:
Ethogram- A catalog of all an animal’s specific behaviors.

Procedure:
1) Students should be instructed to go to an area where people are involved in normal daily activities (Cafeteria, Supermarket, mall, park etc.).

1) Students should observe people for 5 - 10 minutes.

2) Students should write down all the behaviors that they observe. At the end of the allotted time, students should construct an ethogram for people. On the ethogram worksheet, the students should write at least 10 behaviors that they observed and attach codes to those behaviors. For example, the behavior Walking may be coded as W. Next, the students should write a description or definition of the behavior. Encourage the students to be very specific and detailed, so someone else could distinguish this behavior from all others. For example, walking could be described as slowly moving forward by placing one foot in front of the other. This is a good exercise, and is more difficult with the simple and everyday behaviors.

3) After students have generated an ethogram, they should select a classmate to observe. This should be done without the knowledge of the person being observed. On a separate piece of paper, students should list all of their behavior codes. For exactly five minutes the students should record the behaviors by making a tally mark beside the code each time they observe a behavior. This type of data collection is called All Occurrence Sampling.

Example:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Tally</th>
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<td>BEHAVIOR</td>
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3. Animal Observation

**Objective:** Students will identify reasons to research animals. Students will observe and record physical characteristics and behaviors of a common animal.

**Background:**
Research is a quest for knowledge through a systematic investigation. Although some research may involve intervention or experimentation, other research may only require observation and data collection. By researching animals, scientists learn about behaviors, habitats, adaptations, and human influence. When scientists observe animals, they document their behaviors in different ways including writing notes, using a check sheet for data collection, or recording a video. Scientists record their data in an objective and systematic way. This exercise will give students an opportunity to use their observational skills and to document their findings. Consider studying animals in their natural environment, such as squirrels, chipmunks, birds, or insects. Other animals to consider are ones that you may already have in the classroom, such as snakes, gerbils, hamsters, rabbits, or fish.

**Materials:**
1) Field Notes activity sheet
2) Wrist watch
3) Small animal to observe or an animal video if live observations are not feasible

**Time Frame:**
This is a 30-minute activity that can be completed during class. It is also a great homework assignment for students preparing for the Field Observation program.

**Vocabulary:**
Observation: Using all your senses to perceive what is happening
Hypothesis: A statement of an educated guess
Field Notes: Written records of observations made in a natural setting
Subjective: Affected by opinion or emotion
Ethogram: A catalog of all an animal’s specific behaviors.
**Procedure:**
1) Identify where students will make their animal observations.

2) Distribute the activity sheet “Field Notes."

3) Discuss a general ethogram (a list of behaviors) that the class will use. The ethogram should include the following:
   - Locomotion
   - Feeding
   - Social
   - Stationary
   - Active
   - Other Behaviors

4) Students should observe the animal for a total of 15 minutes. For the first 3 minutes, the students should describe the animal’s physical appearance. Students should also describe the characteristics of each of the behaviors that are being observed (example, bird locomotion = fly, hop, walk on branch).

5) For the remaining time, students should use the Field Notes activity sheet to record detailed observations of the animal's behaviors. Students should use their watch to note the time when behaviors occur. Make sure students use the ethogram when recording behavior.

**Extension**
1) Compile the data collected and have students make a graph. Students could calculate the frequency of a behavior (the number of times a behavior occurred during the observation period) or the duration of a behavior (length of time that a behavior occurred).
FIELD NOTES: ANIMAL OBSERVATION CHART

Date:_________  Animal:_________________  Observer:_______________

Physical Description of Animal:____________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHOGRAM (list of behaviors)</th>
<th>Description or Definition of Behavior</th>
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<td>Locomotion</td>
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<td>Active</td>
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<td>Other Behaviors</td>
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OBSERVATIONS

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