

LESSON PLAN

1

Skills: listening; create understanding of zoo animals, identify and label zoo animals, classify, the letter "Z"

Preparation: letter cards to spell "zoo." Most classrooms have a border display of the entire alphabet to refer to during the year. This helps to teach the letter "Z."

Materials: poster paper, writing materials, construction paper

Tip: Have a large, easy-to-read age-appropriate map of the world on display so that you can point to where some zoo animals originally came from. An important point to teach is that animals are brought to zoos from all over the world.

Resources: [Zella, Zack, and Zodiac](#), by Bill Peet; [A Children's Zoo](#), by Tana Hoban; [At the Zoo](#), by Claire Henley; [Zoo Animals](#), by Judy Nayer

Funsheets: Preschool/Kindergarten [Writing Sheet 51](#); Grade K, [Math 9, 11, 12](#)

Introduction to Zoo Animals

Grade PreSchool-K

ZOO ANIMALS • LESSON PLANS • 001

Objective: Students will develop a better understanding of the differences between zoo animals and animals that are not in the zoo.

Introduction: Announce enthusiastically, "Today we will be starting a new Unit, a study of zoo animals! Has everybody been to the zoo?"

Read: [Zella, Zack, and Zodiac](#)

Procedure:

1. Ask students to name animals they are familiar with, and make a chart on the board as they name each one. Classify the animal as either a zoo animal or not. When you have a list of 10 or so, talk about the differences and similarities between these two classifications. For instance, lions and the horses both have four legs and fur, but we would not try to ride a lion.
2. Speculate as to why zoos were created and how the animals got there.
3. Use the worksheet on the next page for practicing writing the letter "z" and the word zoo.

Follow-up Activity: More fun with the letter "Z"

1. Pass out letter cards for the word "zoo" and have students put them in the right order; they may then write the word "zoo" in their books.
2. Using a sheet of drawing paper, demonstrate to students how to draw the letter "Z," filling the entire page; then have them color the three spaces left over.

How to Make Books: For detailed instructions on how to make a journal, see [Dinosaurs, Grade Preschool-K, Lesson 2](#), and [Dinosaurs, Grade 1-2, Lesson 2](#); in this case the shape could be a lion's head, or an elephant's body, or simply a square with any animal drawn on it. The journal could be used for recording observations at the zoo or in the classroom; after each animal is discussed, have students draw its picture in their books.

Zoo Animals Learning Center: Collect lots of outdated natural history magazines such as *Audubon*, *Natural History*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Discover*, *Falcon*, and *Ranger Rick*; they are easy to find in second-hand bookstores and thrift shops. They make wonderful sources of photographs that can be used as examples of animals and their habitats, and can be cut up to make collages and for other art activities. Leave these in the [Zoo Animals Learning Center](#).

***FACT FILES:** Copy the Learning Page [Fact Files](#) and distribute with a colored pocket folder. Give students time to organize, look them over, and decorate the covers of the folder. As an introduction to the Unit, take some time with the students to look at the [Fact Files](#), page by page, reading the information slowly as they follow with their eyes and fingers.

LESSON PLAN

2

Skills: recall, describe, list facts

Preparation: Obtain tape or cassette of Paul Simon's song "At the Zoo."

Materials: materials to make word cards

Resources: [1, 2, 3 to the Zoo](#), by Eric Carle; [Dear Zoo](#), by Rod Campbell.

Tips: Zoo Animals Bulletin Board: Before the Unit gets underway, prepare a Zoo Animals Bulletin Board using colored pictures from the magazines mentioned in Lesson 1. Letter or print out the animals' names on the computer and have them available for other activities. As the Unit progresses, replace the magazine photos with the students' artwork, so at the end of the unit your classroom will have a totally student-created display.

Objective: Students will be able to identify basic zoo animals by name and choose one as their favorite and talk about it (list characteristics).

Introduction: Review what students should have learned from Lesson 1.

Read: [1, 2, 3 to the Zoo](#), and [Dear Zoo](#) over a three day period as an introduction to the Zoo Animals Unit. While reading the books, have students look carefully at the illustrations. Ask leading questions.

Procedure:

1. Have students go through their [Fact File](#) packets and raise their hands to name a zoo animal; after saying it, write it on a precut piece of cardboard or oaktag.
2. Then have students say the whole name, slowly; then write it down on their papers.
3. Review animal names, and then have students match the animal's name to the correct picture on the bulletin board. This animal can now be their animal, a subject for further study, writing, and independent projects.

Conclusion: Point to an animal on the bulletin board and have the student with that card stand up and identify his or her animal.

LESSON PLAN

3

Skills: cooperation, visual perception, collecting data

Preparation: A trip to the local zoo would be a perfect part of this unit if at all possible. Find out in advance if your zoo has an education department that may have guides and instructional aids for teachers.

Materials: copies of the inventory sheet on the next page, camera and film, plenty of water, hats, pencils, and notebooks

Resources: [The Class Trip](#), by Grace MacCarone; [Mealtime for Zoo Animals](#), by Caroline Arnold; [My Visit to the Zoo](#), by Alik

Words with Special Meanings

zookeeper: a person who works at the zoo taking care of the zoo animals

Objective: Students will do "hands-on" research and collect information on-site at the zoo.

Introduction: Prepare the students daily for a few days in advance of the trip. Ask how many students have been to a zoo, either in this city or area, or another such as the San Diego Zoo or the Central Park zoo.

Read: For a few days before the trip, read any of the books recommended; those mentioned at left may be most appropriate.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into groups, ideally with a parent or aide as a guide.
2. Give each group an animal which will be *their* animal to learn about at the zoo. Students should spend more time with that animal than others. Encourage students to talk to the zookeepers and read all the information about that animal (or rather, have the aide read it to them).
3. Have students check off the animals as they see them from the Zoo Animals Inventory.
4. After returning to class, have each group report on their experience and everything they learned about their animal.
5. Review the Zoo Animal Inventory sheets; what animals did they see that are *not* on the list?

Conclusion: Students should be able to demonstrate what they remembered from the zoo, liked and didn't like, etc. by talking before the group, drawing a picture, or writing in their zoo journals (teachers can transcribe from dictation).

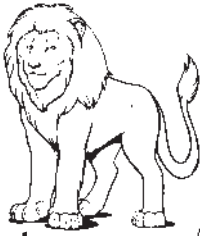
Further Possibilities:

1. **Drawing:** Have students draw their favorite zoo animals from the field trip.
2. **Mapping:** Have them work on the floor on large pieces of butcher paper to make a map, or plan, of that zoo or any other zoo.

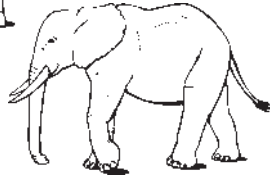
ZOO ANIMALS INVENTORY

Name _____

☐ Lion



☐ Elephant



☐ Zebra



☐ Giraffe



☐ Kangaroo



☐ Koala



☐ Panda



☐ Gorilla



☐ Polar Bear



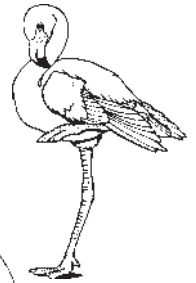
☐ Penguin



☐ Tiger



☐ Flamingo



☐ Cockatoo



☐ Walrus



☐ Sea Lion



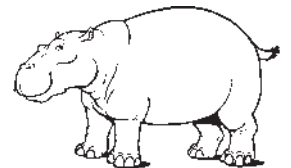
☐ Dolphin



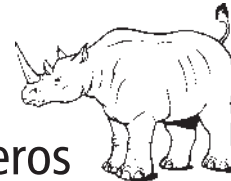
☐ Camel



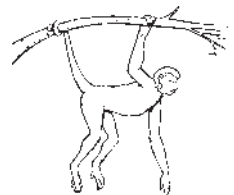
☐ Hippopotamus



☐ Rhinoceros



☐ Spider Monkey



LESSON PLAN

4

Skills: the letter "B," making visual comparisons, seeing similarities and differences in a group

Preparation: world map posted on the wall, Fact Files for Panda and Polar Bear, and additional information on American brown and/or black bears, word and letter cards for "bear"; collect recycled plastic bottles with narrow squeeze-tops such as those used for mustard, ketchup, or plastic bear honey bottles. Premix the "puff paints" in different colors and pour into squeeze bottles.

Puff Paint Recipe:

Mix 1 cup flour to 1 cup salt, add 1 cup water. Divide the mixture into bowls and color each one with dry tempera paint. Be sure to have "beary" colors: brown, black, white (or pale yellow), red, yellow, and green.

Resources: [Polar Bear](#), [Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?](#), by Eric Carle; [Big Bad Bruce](#), by Bill Peet; [Blueberries for Sal](#), by Robert McClosky; [Bear By Himself](#), by Geoffrey Hayes; [Polar Mammals](#), by Larry Dane Brimner

Funsheets: Kindergarten, [Language 3](#); [Science 3](#), [7](#)

Objective: Students will understand that there are many kinds of bears and that they come from different countries far away from us with very different habitats (homes); to recognize the letter "B."

Introduction: Pass out the [Fact Files](#) for the Panda and Polar Bear. If possible, also have on hand a picture of a black or brown bear. The brown bear is indigenous to the United States and is in many zoos. The teddy bear is fashioned after that bear, and is a bear image that young students will be familiar with.

Look at the map and point out the areas where the different bears come from (Africa, China, North America). Look at pictures of the three types of bears.

Read: [Polar Bear](#), [Polar Bear](#), [What Do You Hear?](#) As you read, talk about the polar bear in the book and all the things he heard.

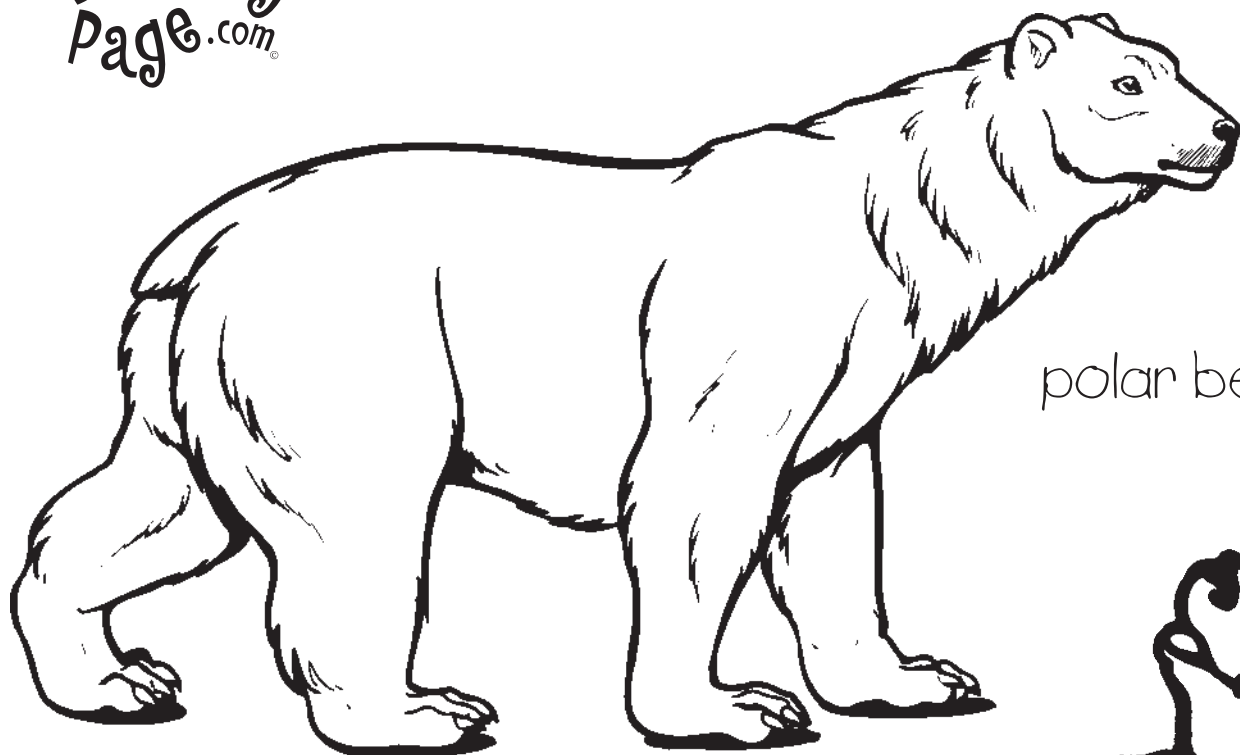
Procedure:

1. Ask for input on other kinds of bears students may have heard of.
2. Ask students for input on what is different and what is the same about each bear.
3. Pass out the bear patterns on the next page and have students pick one bear of the three. Trace one bear onto oaktag or other heavy paper.
4. Demonstrate how to use the puff paints to paint and decorate their bears. Suggest that it's like putting the icing on cookies!

Conclusion: Review the letter "B" and how to spell bear; use the worksheet on the following page to practice writing "B" and "bear."

Further Possibilities: After talking about where different bears come from, look at some of the other Fact Files and read together to see where other zoo animals come from. Refer back to Lesson 4.

Take all the bears in the class and decorate a bulletin board or make a bear mobile!



polar bear



brown bear



panda bear

Name _____

B b



Bear bear

B B B B B

B B B B Bear

b b b b b b

b b b b b bear

Bb Bb Bb Bb

LESSON PLAN

5

Skills: grouping, compare and contrast, visual perception and imagining

Preparation: Cut out big cat shapes before class and label them (tiger, ocelot, and leopards are good ones).

Materials: tempera paints, brushes and other non-traditional painting tools such as cotton swabs, sticks, or rags

Resources: [How Many Spots Does a Leopard Have?](#), by Julius Lester; [Swift as the Wind: the Cheetah](#), by Barbara Esbensen; *How the Leopard Got Its Spots*, a traditional folktale, by Rudyard Kipling; *How the Leopard Got His Spots*, read by Danny Glover (audio)

Funsheets: [Fundamentals, 24](#); Grade 1, [Science 1](#)

Objective: Students will be familiar with one family of zoo animals; to see the cat family as a group and to see the differences between cats.

Introduction: "There are all kinds of big cats in the zoo. Who can name some?" (Tigers, lions, ocelots, cheetahs, pumas and leopards.) Students may also name some cats that are not in the zoo: domestic cats we keep as pets, or cats that live in the wild in the western United States.

Read: [Put Me in the Zoo](#)

Procedure:

1. Using light-colored butcher paper draw and cut out big outline shapes of two or three of the zoo cats. Tape them to an easel, wall, or spread them out on the floor.
2. Using 1 finger, 2 fingers, 1 brush or 2, rags, or Q-tips have students take turns painting one cat with stripes and one with spots.

Conclusion: After all the cats are spotted or striped, ask the group to observe and compare the leopard's and zebra's markings. Make a drawing collage (fold a piece of paper into quarters and draw samples of 4 different cats' fur patterns).

Further Possibilities: Listen to the audio, or read *How the Leopard Got His Spots*. Read [Swift as the Wind: the Cheetah](#), about how cheetahs are the fastest runners on earth.

LESSON PLAN

6

Skills: using imagination, think about work (careers)

Preparation: Get a white painter's hat (inexpensive, at paint-supply stores) and letter the word "zookeeper" across the front of it; if budget allows, purchase one for each student and follow up the activity with a cap-making workshop.

Materials: drawing materials; plasticine clay and various found materials

Resources: *If I Ran the Zoo*, by Dr. Seuss; *Jungle Jack Hanna's What ZooKeepers Do*, by Jack Hanna; *Feed the Animals*, by H. A. Rey; *The Tiger Has a Toothache: Helping Animals at the Zoo*, by Patricia Lauber

Words with Special Meanings

veterinarian: a medical doctor who specializes in the prevention and treatment of diseases and injuries in animals

Funsheets: [Fundamentals](#), 1; Kindergarten, [Science 5-7](#)

Objective: Students will develop an awareness of work and understanding of the responsibilities of the zookeeper.

Introduction: Introduce the book, *If I Ran the Zoo*, by mentioning Dr. Seuss, an author they are probably all familiar with. (Dr. Seuss's father was a zookeeper.) This is a whimsical look at keeping a zoo but gets them thinking about the zookeeper as an important part of the zoo.

Read: *If I Ran the Zoo*, wearing the zookeeper's cap.

Procedure:

1. After you are finished reading the book, ask students to list the different jobs done by people who work at the zoo (veterinarian, groundskeeper, person who sells tickets, person who runs the snack bar, etc.).
2. If it is possible to have caps for the entire class, have students letter the word *zookeeper* on their caps with an indelible fabric marker; then, take turns or go around in a circle and have each student make a statement that begins with: "If I ran the zoo . . ." It would be fun to videotape the readings and play the tape back at the end of the unit, especially if you celebrated with a theme party.
3. Have students draw a picture illustrating a zookeeper at work.
4. A self-portrait of themselves *if they ran the zoo*.
5. An imaginary animal of their own making.

Conclusion: After everyone has finished, or the next day, display the drawings from #3 and #4 on the board and brainstorm funny names for all these creatures. Write the names on a paper label as the students invent them.

Further Possibilities: For a more serious look at the occupation of zookeeper, offer to read some of the other books from the [Learning Center](#). Ask if anyone would want to be a zookeeper when he or she grows up.

Using plasticine clay and other materials (paper, yarn, wire, sticks, feathers, wiggly eyes, etc.) have students take their drawings one step further and create a fanciful animal of their own for their make-believe zoo.

LESSON PLAN

7

Skills: awareness of camouflage, review the letter "Z"

Preparation: Using the [Fact File](#) illustration of the zebra, make several cardboard patterns for students to trace their zebras.

Materials: drawing paper, crayons, "Z" letter cards

Resources: [Zebra](#), by Caroline Arnold; [Zella, Zack and Zodiac](#), by Bill Peet; [The Zoo Book](#), by Jan Pfloug

Words with Special Meanings

camouflage: characteristic that helps an animal hide, protect itself, and be safe

Funsheets:

Preschool/Kindergarten Writing Sheet, [51](#); Kindergarten, [Science 4](#); Grade 1, [Language 7](#), [Science 9](#)

Objective: Students will be able to name several characteristics of zebras.

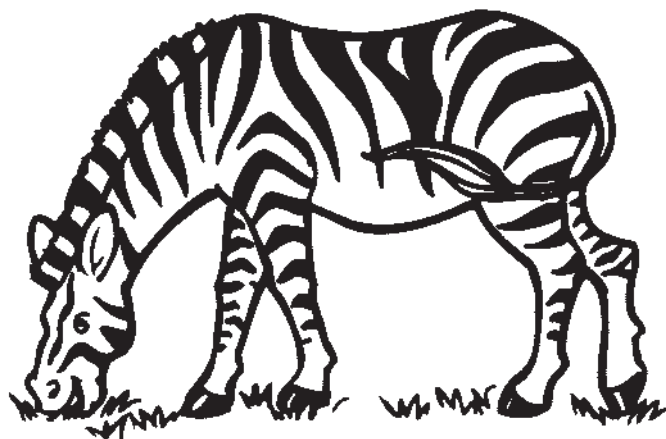
Introduction: Another "Z" word: zebra. Scramble letter cards and lean them against the the board on the chalk rail. Ask for guesses on what the word spells. Have a few students come up and write the letters on the board.

Read: [Zella, Zack and Zodiac](#), and [Zebra](#), to get visual ideas about zebras and their habitat.

Procedure:

1. No two zebras have the same pattern of stripes (just like our own fingerprints). Demonstrate how to trace the zebra template on their papers, then create their own unique stripe designs.
2. In the background, draw where the zebra lives and hide him in the picture. Ways to hide the zebra: leaves and grass that look like stripes, dark patterns of trees; plants that grow up and down (vertically).
3. Or, place the zebras on the mural and have students create a background to help protect them.

Conclusion: How do you spell zebra? "Tell me three facts about zebras."



LESSON PLAN

8

Skills: classification, awareness of habitat and surroundings

Preparation: Gather various recycled materials: shoe boxes, round oatmeal and salt containers, small cardboard boxes, paper milk containers and fruit baskets for making an aviary or cage; straws, sticks, cardboard, black yarn for bars, aviary wire and netting; copy bird ideas on next page to 129%.

Resources: *Edward the Emu*, by Sheena Knowles; *Antarctic Antics: A Book of Penguin Poems*, by Judy Sierra; *If Anything Ever Goes Wrong at the Zoo*, by Mary Jean Hendrick

Words with Special Meanings

aviary: a large cage or building for keeping many birds

Objective: Students will be able to name 3 birds that live in the zoo and tell a fact about each one.

Introduction: Talk about birds you have seen, in the zoo, elsewhere, or in your reading so far: parrot, ostrich, peacock, hummingbird, toucan, eagle, owl (flamingo, cockatoo, and penguin have [Fact Files](#); penguin has a [Cutout](#)). Some questions to ask: "How are birds contained in zoos? What are their cages made of? How are cages for birds different than other animals' cages? What kinds of things are inside their cages?" Note that the habitat of the penguin would be very different from that of the other birds.

Read: Any of the books on the list that include birds.

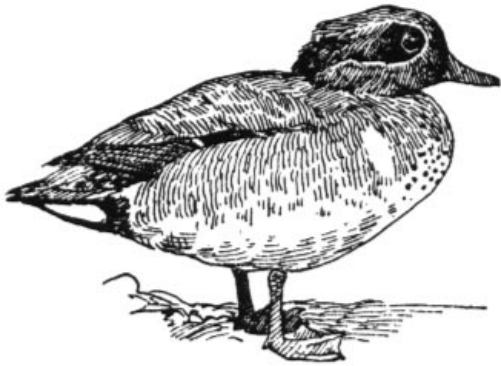
Procedure: Have two class sessions for this activity: one to draw, color, and cut out birds, and one to make cages, or aviaries, for them.

1. Using the the ideas provided, or free-hand drawing, have each student create several birds. Bird shapes and characteristics are familiar to students even this young; they shouldn't hesitate to draw birds and even to make up their own birds. You could do a quick how-to sketch on the board of basic bird structure.
2. Next session, ask for ideas as to what to do with all these birds. "Shall we put them in the zoo? Any ideas about how to make cages?" Present the class with all the materials listed at left and see what they can do with them to produce aviaries.
3. Suggestions: Make a cage out of a shoe box or a large box (with the front cut out): can be a diorama with birds sitting on the ground, perched on trees or sticks, flying (hang from the top). If using [Cutouts](#), paste onto cardboard and leave a tab along the bottom edge to fold back and support the animal; the tab can be pasted to the floor of the diorama. Demonstrate how to make a tab, fold, and paste onto birds students made earlier.

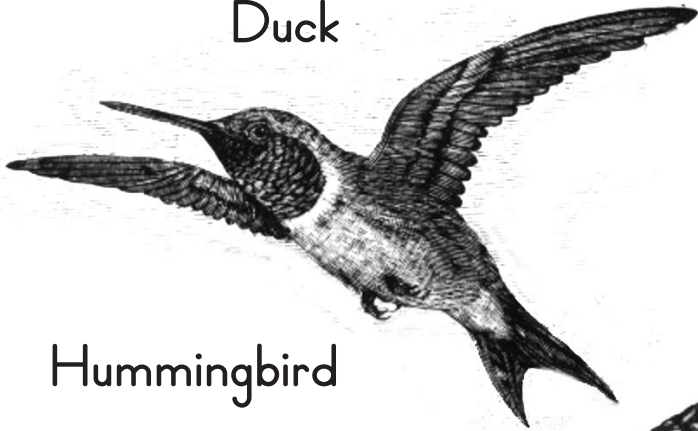
Conclusion: Display all the aviaries; have students name their birds and tell a fact about them.

Further Possibilities:

1. These cages can be for any animal. Use the puff painted bears from Lesson 4 and make a cage or habitat for one or several together.
2. Using the tape-resist method, demonstrate how to make a painting of a bird in a cage: first draw a line on a piece of white paper for the ground. Using narrow masking tape or removable transparent tape, build a fence or cage on the paper; press the tape down well. Then, using colorful felt-tip markers, or watercolor paints, paint the birds and their environment; include things like trees, dead logs, bushes, rocks, etc.). After the drawing is finished and dry, pull up the tape. Now the fence is in front of the birds! If you want to, you may use a black marker to add details.



Duck



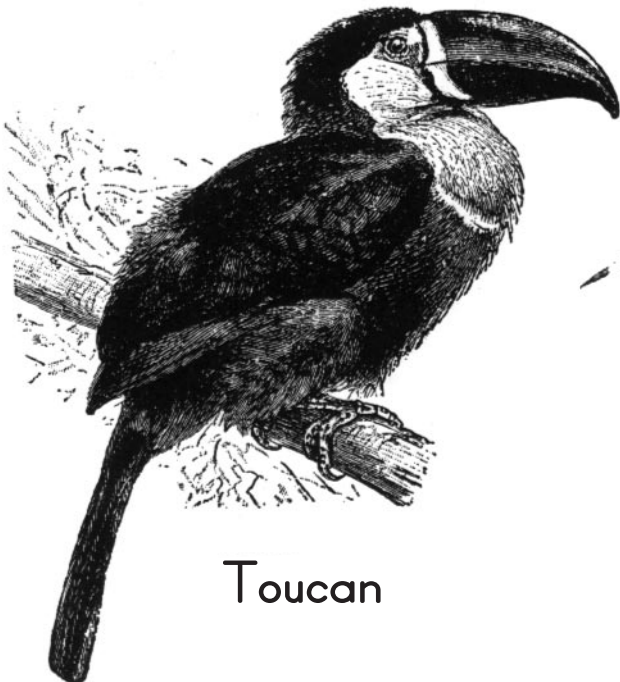
Hummingbird



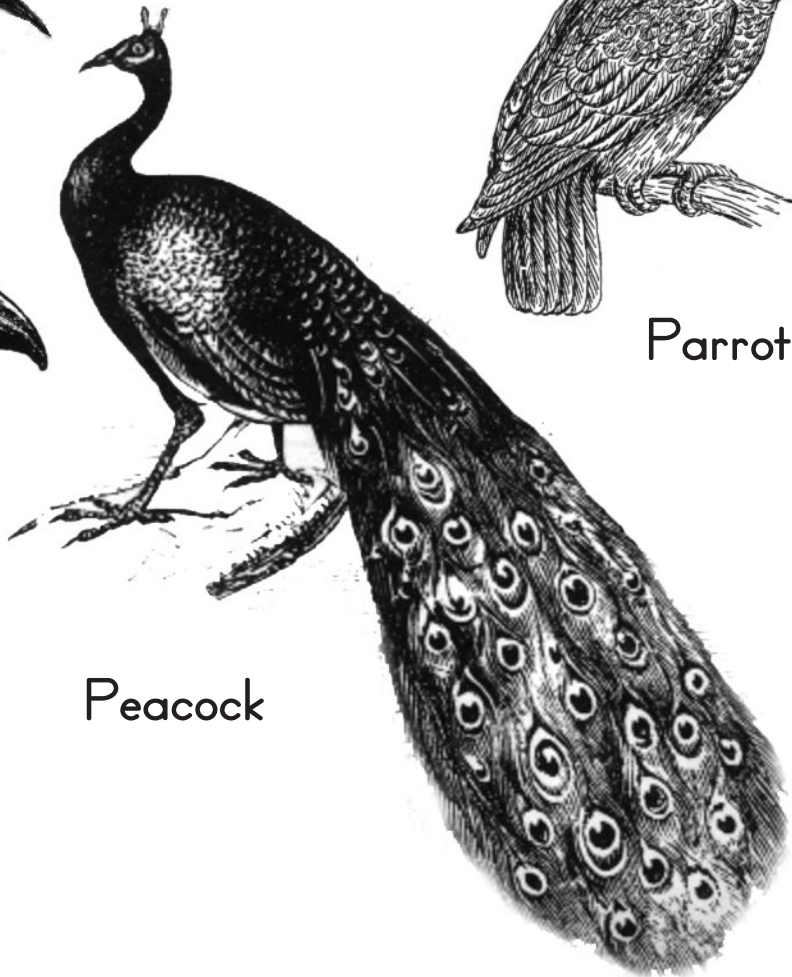
Eagle



Parrot



Toucan



Peacock

LESSON PLAN

9

Skills: following directions, using a variety of colors, cutting and pasting

Preparation: Make copies of the elephant pattern on the next page, enlarged to 129%.

Materials: tempera paints or finger paints in bright primary colors, brushes, white paper, scissors, pencils, colored construction paper

Tip: The pattern can also be used to create a border for bulletin boards; use the "paper-doll" method of cutting to create one long string of elephants.

Resources: [Elmer](#), by David McKee; [Elmer's Colors](#), by David McKee; [African Animal Giants: A National Geographic Action Book](#), by Robert Cremins

Funsheets: Grade 1, [Science 9](#)

Objective: Students will be able to identify more zoo animal characteristics, to appreciate our special individual qualities, and reinforce knowledge of colors and their names.

Introduction: Ask, "What do we know about elephants?" When the issue of size comes up, and if you have previously studied insects, take the opportunity to talk about big, bigger, biggest. If you have studied dinosaurs, mention the mammoth, which is a prehistoric ancestor of the elephant.

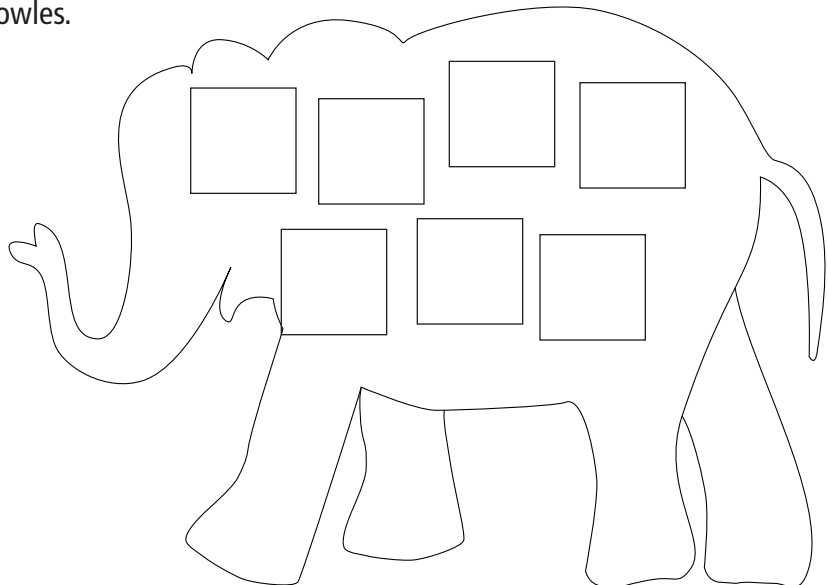
Read: [Elmer](#)

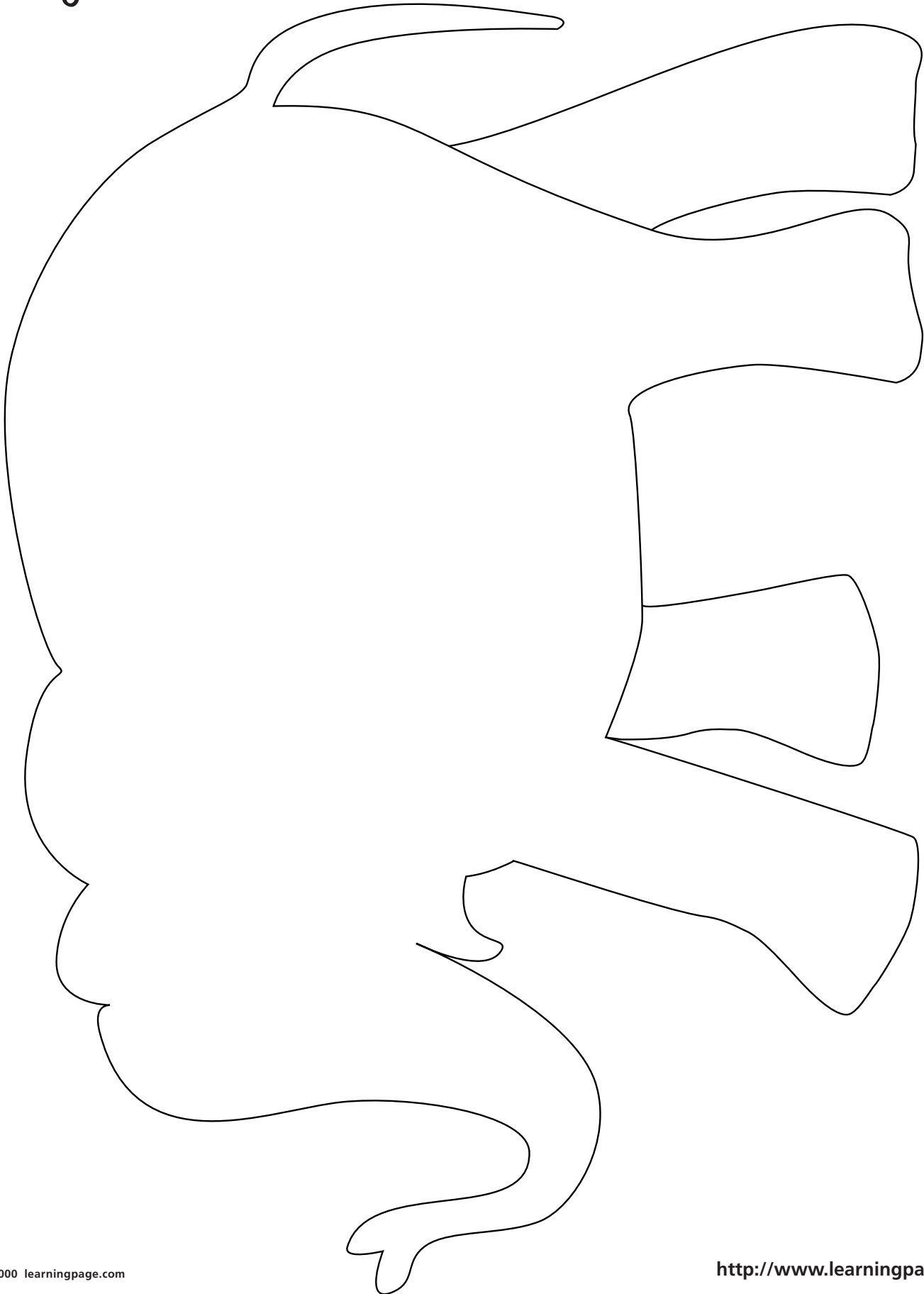
Procedure:

1. Talk about some other characteristics of elephants: big ears, a trunk that can act like fingers and pick up things, tusks.
2. Have students use fingerpaints or tempera to color several squares on a piece of white drawing paper or fingerpainting paper (shiny shelf paper works well). Show them on the board how to divide their papers into squares by either drawing them with a pencil or folding the paper in half until you have the size of box you need (it doesn't need to be a square).
3. Put the papers aside to dry; pass out the elephant pattern and have students trace it onto colored construction paper and cut out (it's OK if the tail is cut off accidentally, add a yarn tail later).
4. When paintings are dry, demonstrate how to cut out the colors into squares and paste them onto their Elmer.

Conclusion: As they paste down their squares, encourage students to say the colors out loud. Refer back to the book to reinforce Elmer's uniqueness and the students' individuality.

Another good book for teaching self-confidence is [Edward the Emu](#), by Sheena Knowles.





LESSON PLAN 10

Skills: tallest, shortest; following directions

Preparation: Make copies of the attached bookmark pattern sheet, preferably on heavy paper.

Materials: bookmark pattern, yarn, paper punch, school paste, laminating materials

Tips: Studying giraffes offers lots of opportunities to classify animals according to height. These comparisons and contrasts could be recorded on a bar chart.

You could also do measuring exercises, such as cutting string the height of a giraffe (or a giraffe's neck) and comparing it to a child's or to the height of a window or door.

Resources: [The Giraffe \(Animal Close-Ups\)](#), by Christine Denis-Huot; [Clarence the Talking Giraffe](#), by Justin Case; [I Wonder Who Stretched the Giraffe's Neck](#), by Mona Gansburg Hodgson; [Giraffe Trouble](#), by Jean Craighead George

Objective: Students will be able to talk about special features of the giraffe and be able to color a giraffe pattern to make a book mark.

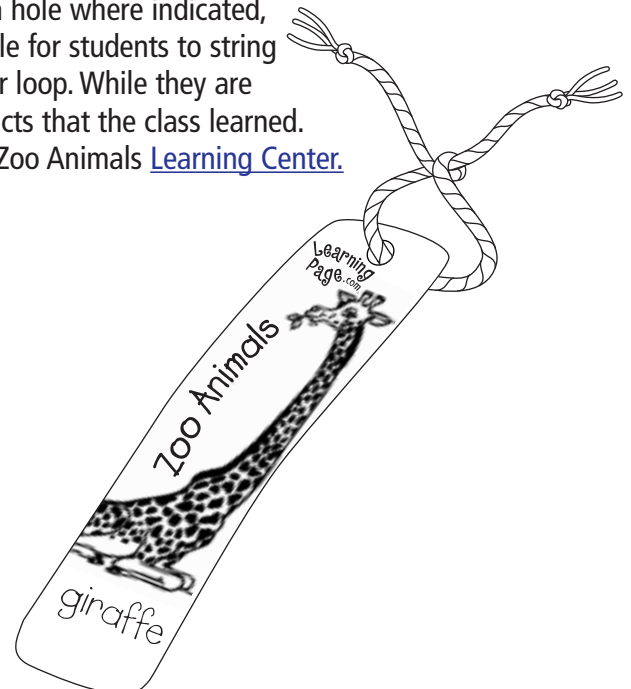
Introduction: Looking through the [Fact Files](#), ask, "Who can guess which zoo animal is the tallest?"

Read: One or more of the giraffe books mentioned at left.

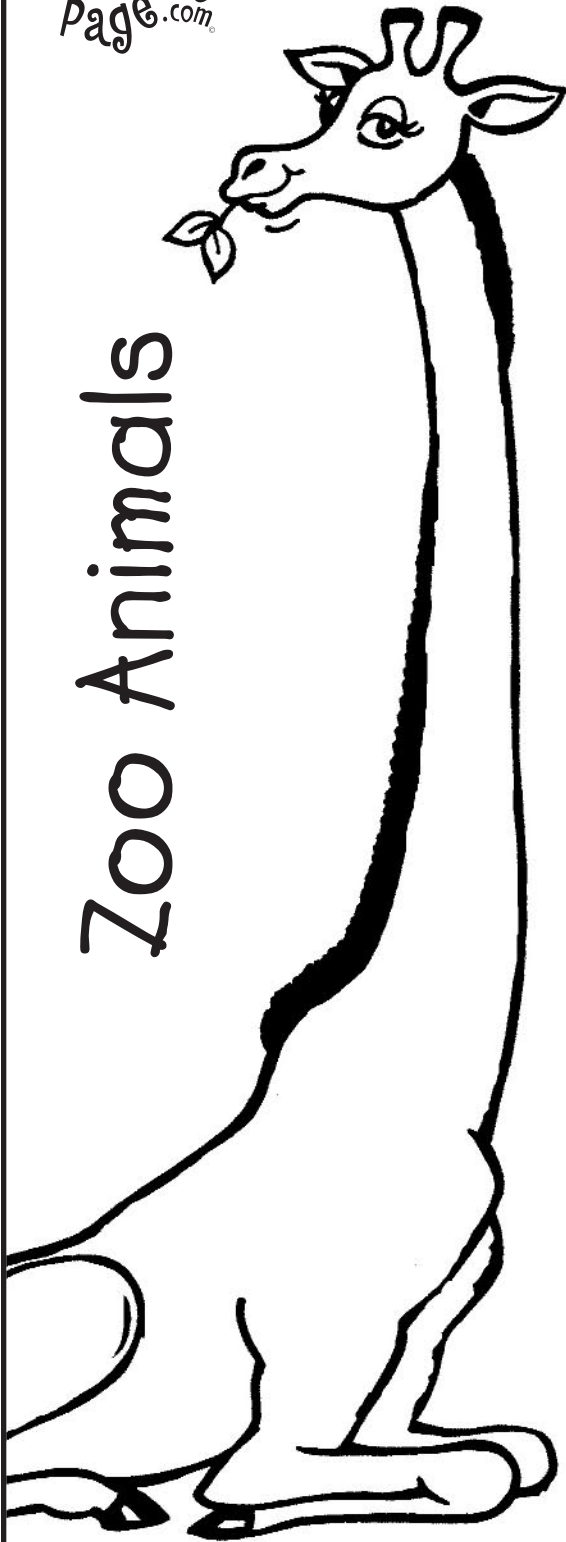
Procedure:

1. Talk about the obvious characteristics of the giraffe; ask students for ideas and input. Then add some of your own (the giraffe has 7 vertebrae in its neck, just like other mammals, for example.) Remind students that the giraffe is another member of the mammal family, and that it lives in Africa. Point to Africa on classroom map; if the world map has been used before to talk about animals' habitats [Lesson 1] have student volunteers point to Africa.
2. Pass out the giraffe bookmarks sheet on the next page. Ask the students to color in the spots of the giraffes, and to use their imaginations. Students do not need to stick to the traditional colors and spot shapes, for example. Be sure students write their names on the bookmarks.
3. After bookmarks are colored, ask students to cut them out carefully. Students can then paste them together so the bookmark will be two-sided. This task might need some teacher assistance. Use paste sparingly; bookmarks will be laminated later.

Conclusion: Laminate the bookmarks after class and cut them roughly apart. Students can then trim them close to the edge if they can or you may precut them. Use the hole puncher to make a hole where indicated, and have lots of colored yarns available for students to string through the hole and tie into a knot or loop. While they are working, casually review the giraffe facts that the class learned. Display the giraffe book marks in the Zoo Animals [Learning Center](#).



Zoo Animals



giraffe

Zoo Animals



giraffe

name