

# Animal Care

## 9-12 Onsite Activity

### Lesson Summary

Students explore the Zoo and examine animal social dynamics, which may have advantages and disadvantages for different animals.

### Objectives

Students will be able to make observe animal behavior

Students will be able to consider advantages and disadvantages of different social structures

### Essential Question

What does an animal need to survive and how does a zoo provide that?

### Materials

- Paper (or worksheet such as provided at the end of the lesson)
- Writing utensils

### Prep

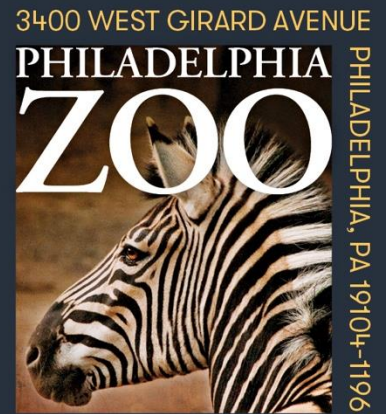
1. 1 Week before: Look at the [Zoo map](#) to determine locations for observations
2. 1 Day before: Print out worksheets as needed (1 for each student)
3. 15 minutes before: Prep students for expectations

### Key Terms

- **Zookeeper:** The person/people responsible for the daily care animals that live at the zoo for conservation purposes
- **Veterinarian:** A doctor for animals.
- **Basic Needs:** All living things including animals need food, water, and shelter to survive and these are called their basic needs. Different animals have different types of specific needs.
- **Hygiene:** The practice of keeping clean, for example a habitat to ensure health and prevent sickness for one's self or another being.
- **Diet:** The specific types and amounts of food and drink eaten and drunk by an animal.
- **Enrichment:** Practices or items that improve the quality care for animals, by encouraging natural behaviors and simultaneously exercising the bodies and minds of the animals.
- **Training:** The practice of teaching an animal a specific behavior or skills for enrichment and for the benefit or their care.
- **Choice:** The act of animals being able to decide if they want to participate in training or not.
- **Husbandry:** The care of animals including observing to monitor health, cleaning to ensure hygiene, preparing and providing diets, training for care and enrichment.

### Background

Animal Care is a full team effort. Many people are involved in making sure every animal is taken care of in a safe and healthy environment, is given all of the necessary basic needs, and is provided enrichment as well. Although



many people think of zookeepers and veterinarians as the main animal caretakers at a Zoo, many different people and careers are important. This also includes nutritionists, curators, scientific researchers, maintenance, and many more!

Those that work in animal care are animal advocates and protectors, striving to give these animals the best life possible in the name of conservation. They work together and collaborate to make sure that their animals basic needs are met every day, but also their mental wellbeing. They take observations to make decisions on how to maintain safety for the animals, proper type and amount of food, hygiene, and enrichment.

## Implementation

1. Excite: Welcome students to the Philadelphia Zoo ask them to consider different activities they prefer to do either alone or with others. Why that might be?
2. Explore: As you walk around the zoo, ask students to consider the animals at the Zoo, and determine if they appear to be living alone, in pairs, in family groups, or in colonies.
3. Explain: Remind students that animal caretakers need to understand all the unique features and needs of the animals, to ensure the animals get the best care possible. For example, not only do they need to ensure that the animals are getting their food, water, shelter, and physical space, but the social space too. Some animals are solitary animals that prefer to be on their own, while other animals are social, that depend on others for their safety and wellbeing. Whatever the social structure, the Zoo makes an effort to provide the animals the opportunity to live in the way they would in the wild.
4. Elaborate: Invite students to spend some extra time observing a few exhibits. With each exhibit, invite students to describe how many animals of the same species they see living in that exhibit. Based on these observations, would they consider this animal to be solitary or social? What might the advantages and disadvantages be of living in this social structure in the wild?
5. Evaluate: Ask students to share what additional things they may have learned about animal care through their deeper observations.

## Additional Resources

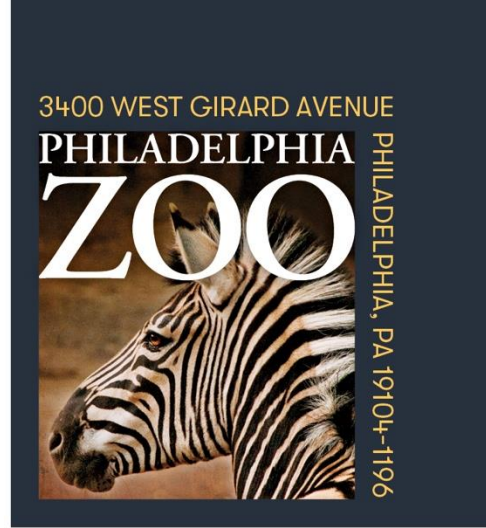
[Ask a Keeper](#)

[Behind-the-scenes with a Veterinarian](#)

[Behind-the-scenes with a Nutritionist](#)

## Curriculum References

4.1.10.A, 4.1.12.A, 4.3.10.A, 4.3.12.A, 4.3.10.B, 4.3.12.B



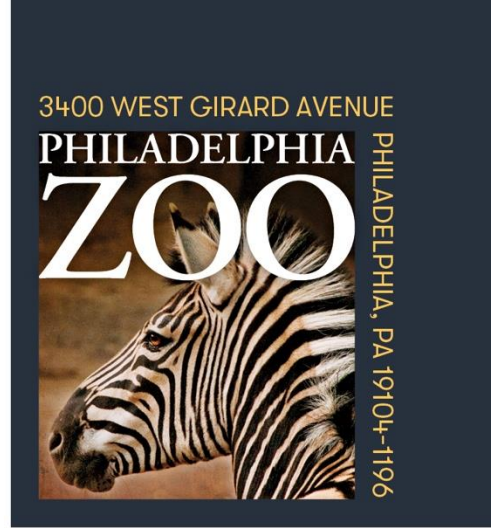
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome to the Zoo! Visit a few exhibits. Record the animal you observe and some notes regarding how many others (if any) the animal is interacting with and how they are interacting with them. Based on these observations determine if the animal is a solitary or social animal. Then consider advantages and disadvantages.



Animal Observed	Observations of Behavior	Inferred Social Structure
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social
		<input type="checkbox"/> Solitary <input type="checkbox"/> Social

What advantages and disadvantages would living a solitary lifestyle have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What advantages and disadvantages would living a social lifestyle have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_