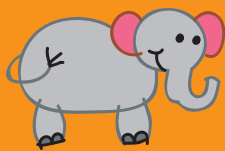


WILD ANIMALS



THEME BOX



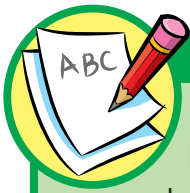
Designed to meet these objectives:

- Students will listen attentively and respond to instructions.
- Students will use oral language to describe objects and experiences.
- Students will learn new words and expand vocabulary.
- Students will sort objects by various attributes.
- Students will build number sense.
- Students will identify numbers and count corresponding quantities.
- Students will create and interpret simple graphs and charts.
- Students will measure length with standard or nonstandard units.
- Students will learn about the characteristics of living things.
- Students will compare and contrast attributes of wild animals and their habitats.
- Students will develop gross motor skills.

Your new Wild Animals Theme Box has everything you need for comprehensive, hands-on lessons that span the curriculum. We've included a wide variety of props and manipulatives that help children learn about wild animals—and develop a concrete understanding of the subject. Inside this guide, you'll find ideas and instructions for dozens of involving, animal-themed activities covering 10 cross-curricular learning areas—from math to dramatic play! We've even included a list of terrific children's books to build up your classroom library. The Wild Animals Theme Box is a perfect way to capture children's attention and boost essential skills!

What's Included

- 1 wild animal cube
- 8 animal tracks stamps
- Ink pad
- 12 finger puppets
- 10 wild animal photo cards
- 24 miniature animals
- Habitat sorting center (4 sorting cards and 16 sorting pieces)
- Mystery box with 24 clue cards
- Storage tub



Language

- Explain that the place where an animal naturally lives is called a “habitat.” Discuss which animals live in different habitats, such as rain forests, polar regions, grasslands, and deserts. Then, set out the habitat sorting center and encourage children to sort the photographic animal pieces by habitat.
- Talk about the many ways in which animals communicate. Lions roar; wolves howl; and so on. Animals also use body positions and scents to communicate. Use the wild animal finger puppets to put on a show explaining the ways in which animals “talk” to each other.
- Many animals have distinctive features, such as the giraffe’s long neck, the kangaroo’s pouch, and the elephant’s trunk. Show children the photo cards and discuss the animals’ features. What are they used for? What special features do people have?
- Discuss what animals eat. Explain that some animals eat mostly meat (carnivores); others eat mostly plants (herbivores); some eat both meat and plants (omnivores). Make three header cards on index cards. Draw pictures and write the category on each card. Place the header cards in the top row of a pocket chart. Then, help children classify the wild animal sorting pieces, placing each one in the pocket chart below the appropriate header card.
- Place the clue cards into the mystery box. Pull out a card and read the clues one at a time. Invite students to guess after each clue. Flip the card over to see the answer and a photo of that animal.
- Invite a child to roll the animal cube. Can she name the animal on the top of the cube and tell you something about it? (Other children can help if needed.) Repeat until everyone has had a turn.



Art

- Create shadow box habitats for the miniature animals. Use shallow boxes or lids, and form habitat features from sand, rocks, leaves, twigs, construction paper, cotton balls, and other materials.
- Use paper plates and craft materials to make wild animal masks. Add special features, such as horns, antlers, whiskers, a lion’s mane, or the trunk of an elephant.
- Invite children to use the stamps and ink pad to make animal tracks on paper. Then, provide air-dry clay and prompt them to create similar tracks in the clay. When the tracks are dry, place them on a table to form trails.
- Many birds like peacocks and parrots have brightly colored feathers. Provide children with stiff feathers from a craft store. Have children dip the feathers into paint and paint their own colorful birds.
- Form birds’ nests from straw, string, moss, twigs, glue—and children’s imaginations!
- Look at photos and discuss the colors of the grasslands: yellows, browns, oranges, and light greens. Provide watercolors and paper, and encourage children to paint a grasslands habitat. What other habitats can they paint?



Sand & Water

- Build a desert habitat in the sand. Add details with twigs and rocks. Which of the miniature animals would like to live in this habitat?
- Set rocks around a tub of water to create a pond or lake. Place wetland animals in and around the water.
- Hide the miniature animals in a sandbox. Encourage children to dig them out.



Science

- Point out that owls' eyes both face forward, unlike most birds. But, owls cannot move their eyes. Instead, they are able to turn their heads almost all the way around! How far can children turn their heads? How does being able to move your eyes help you to see?
- Talk about how animals have adapted (changed) to survive in their unique habitats. For example, water birds have waterproof feathers; polar bears have thick fur and a layer of fat; giraffes have long necks so they can reach treetops; camels have wide feet that help them walk on sand. Make a list of animal features and discuss how these features may help animals survive in their habitats.
- Many animals have colors that make them hard to see. Think of white polar bears in the snow, green frogs on lily pads, or tawny lions in dry grass. This is called "camouflage." Have children hold the miniature animals against different colors of construction paper. Which background colors help hide each animal? Which ones make the animals easy to see?
- Polar animals usually have a layer of fat, or blubber, that helps keep them warm. To see how this helps, rub shortening (such as Crisco®) on each child's left hand. Then, have them dip both of their hands into cool water. Which hand feels cold first?
- Have children use the stamps and ink pad to make animal tracks. Can they guess which animal's foot matches each track?
- Set sheets of black and white paper in the sun, and place a thermometer on each. Which one gets warmer? Does this help us know why desert animals often have light-colored fur?



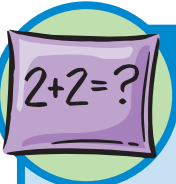
Music

- Have students make sounds they might hear in the jungle at night. What sounds might they hear in a forest?
- Put on some lively music and set out the animal cube. Invite volunteers to take turns rolling a cube, and then encourage everyone to dance like that animal.
- Distribute musical instruments to children. Then, hold up an animal photo card and have children use their instruments to make the sound of that animal walking. Have them shout out the sound that the animal makes.



Active Play

- Hop around the room like kangaroos, frogs, or rabbits. What other hopping animals can children think of?
- Balance on one leg like a flamingo. How long can each child balance?
- Roll the animal cube and have students walk like that animal. Encourage them to make sound effects!
- Draw large animal tracks following the designs on the stamps. Use them to make trails for children to follow.
- Encourage children to pretend to be turtles or rabbits. Then, have the two groups race each other to see which is faster.
- Have students imagine that your playground is a rain forest and move around it like panthers, bears, or monkeys.
- Play wild animal charades. Have a volunteer select an animal photo card while the other children look away. Then, prompt the volunteer to act like that animal. Can the other children guess which animal it is?

 $2+2=?$

Math

- Make a graph or tally chart to show which animals are students' favorites.
- Compare animal sizes. Make a graph to show which animals are the biggest and smallest.
- Many animals that run fast, such as ostriches, gazelles, and cheetahs, have long legs. Measure students' legs to see whose are the longest and whose are the shortest. Then, time children as they run. Do long legs help people run fast?
- Sort the miniature animals by type (bears, cats, birds, and so on). Then, sort them by number of legs. Can children think of other ways to sort the animals?
- Use the animal tracks stamps to make a number book. Stamp one track on the first page and write the numeral 1 in the corner. Stamp two tracks on page number 2, three tracks on page number 3, and so on.
- Have children roll out clay or dough "snakes" of various lengths. Then, measure the snakes with rulers (or use plastic links, linking cubes, or other nonstandard units).



Dramatic Play

- Turn your class into a zoo for a day. You'll need a zoo-keeper, several animals, and children to visit each habitat.
- Send students "underwater" by encouraging them to pretend they are penguins, crocodiles, or walruses.
- Have students imagine they are polar bears lost in a desert. Ask how they feel and what they can do to stay cool. Then, have them pretend they are zebras visiting animal friends in the arctic.
- Help students build zoo homes for the miniature animals in your block play area. Use blocks and construction paper to create habitat enclosures. Paint signs to label each animal's habitat, such as "Mischievous Monkeys." Pick a name for the zoo, paint it on a banner, and hang it near the block play area. Then, invite parents and other children to visit your zoo!
- Go on a safari! Get vests, binoculars, and sun hats. Then, climb in a cardboard box "jeep" and start exploring!



Library

- *Are You My Mother?*
by P. D. Eastman
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*
by Eric Carle
- *Dear Zoo*
by Rod Campbell
- *The Great Kapok Tree*
by Lynne Cherry
- *If I Ran the Zoo*
by Dr. Seuss
- *Is Your Mama a Llama?*
by Deborah Guarino
- *Noses*
by Jill Bailey
- *Rosie's Walk*
by Pat Hutchins



Cooking

- Mix 1 cup peanut butter (or almond butter or cream cheese) with 1 cup honey and 2 cups powdered milk. Slowly stir in more powdered milk until the dough reaches a firm but pliable texture. (You may need to add as much as one additional cup of powdered milk.) Chill the dough until it will hold a shape. Then, give children small balls of dough and have them create their favorite wild animals. The tasty results are ready to eat—no cooking needed!