

For Creative Minds

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Is it Fact or Fiction?

Animals don't really play and talk to each other the way they do in this story. That means that this is a make-believe story. There wouldn't really be coconut trees in the African Savannah (but they would be in the African rainforest or jungle). A baby hippo would probably not really be able to scare off an adult crocodile; but an adult hippo could. What *is* true is that all animals have different behaviors or adaptations that help them survive where they live and to get their food and water.

Animal Adaptations

Giraffes



The giraffes' long necks and legs are adaptations that help them reach high into trees to eat the leaves. Because their necks are so long, giraffes can reach leaves that are higher than any other animal can reach to eat.

Because giraffes are so tall, they can also see all around and often see predators while they are a long way away. That gives them time to run away.

The giraffes' long tongues let them easily break the leaves off the tree.

The spots of different sizes and colors help them to blend into their surrounding area and to camouflage themselves.

Giraffes have hooved feet that are good for standing and running on rough and uneven land.

Vervet Monkeys



Vervet monkeys spend most of their time living in or around trees. They climb high into the trees to sleep or when they are scared.

Monkeys' eyes are located close together and in the front of their heads, just like ours. This helps the monkeys to judge distances so they can jump from one branch to another.

A vervet's long tail helps it to keep its balance as it moves through the trees.

Monkeys have hands similar to ours—they even have fingernails! Some monkeys, like the vervet monkeys, have “thumbs” that help them grab and hold onto things. Humans have the same “thumb” adaptation. *To see what life would be like without your thumbs, tape your thumbs down and see how long you can go without using them! What can't you do without your thumbs?*

Monkeys even have toes on their feet.



Common Hippopotamus or Hippo

The hippos' eyes, noses, and ears are on the top of their heads so they can see, breathe, and hear while they lay low in the water. They close their nostrils (noses) and fold down their ears when they go under water. Hippos' feet have four toes and small webs between the toes to help them "walk" underwater.



Nile Crocodile

Just like the hippo, crocodiles have their eyes & noses high on their heads so they can see and breathe while "hiding" underwater. When "hiding," they look just like logs floating in the water. And, just like the hippo, crocodiles can close their noses and ears when they go underwater. Unlike the hippo, crocodiles have "see-through" eyelids so they can see underwater. The strong claw feet are used to grab prey and hold it underwater. The claws help crocodiles to crawl up onto land, to dig holes for water, and to help the females to dig nests in which to lay their eggs. Crocodiles use sharp teeth to tear apart their food.



Fun Facts Giraffes

- Giraffes have only 7 bones (vertebrae) in their long necks—the same as we have! Their bones or vertebrae are just much longer than ours.
- Their necks are so long that they must spread their front legs to be able to drink.
- Adult giraffes' tongues are over 18 inches long. *Measure 18 inches to see how long their tongues are!*
- A baby giraffe is about 6 feet tall when it is born. *How tall are you? How tall are your mother, father, and teacher? Who is tallest? How long were you when you were born?*
- On average a fully-grown giraffe is about 16 feet tall. The male is about two feet taller than the female. *Measure 16 feet.*



Vervet Monkey or Green Monkey



- Just like there are many different types of cats and dogs, there are many different types of monkeys. The monkey in this story is a vervet monkey that lives in Africa and some parts of the Caribbean. *Can you find those places on a map?* The vervets in the Caribbean are probably descendants of monkeys that were brought over on ships as pets by the early European explorers and settlers.
- Snakes, eagles, leopards, and crocodiles are their predators. If a vervet monkey sees trouble, it calls out an alarm to the others. There are special calls to “say” snake, eagle, or leopard!
- They are awake and active during the day and sleep at night.
- Fully-grown monkeys are between 18 and 26 inches tall and weigh between 7 and 17 pounds.

Common Hippopotamus or Hippo



- The word “Hippopotamus” actually means “river horse” in Greek because they spend most of their day in the water—playing or sleeping. They crawl out of the river to look for food at night.
- Hippos only eat grass and plants (herbivores).
- Baby hippos are born on land or in the water. They can nurse underwater.
- A hippo weighs around 100 pounds when it is born. *How much did you weigh when you were born? What do you weigh now? Who weighs more: you or a baby hippo?*
- Adult hippos may be about ten feet long and about four feet tall.

Nile Crocodile



- Crocodiles are egg-laying reptiles. The female sits on the nest of eggs until they are ready to hatch.
- A baby crocodile is about 12 inches long when it hatches.
- Adult crocodiles may be up to 16 feet long!



Matching Game

Using what you know about each animal, try to match the footprint to the correct animal.



Craft Activity: Mix-and-Match Activity Book

On the next page you will find a template for a mix-and-match book. Here is how to make your book:

Photocopy or download the page from www.ArbordalePublishing.com.

Cut out each rectangle containing an animal.

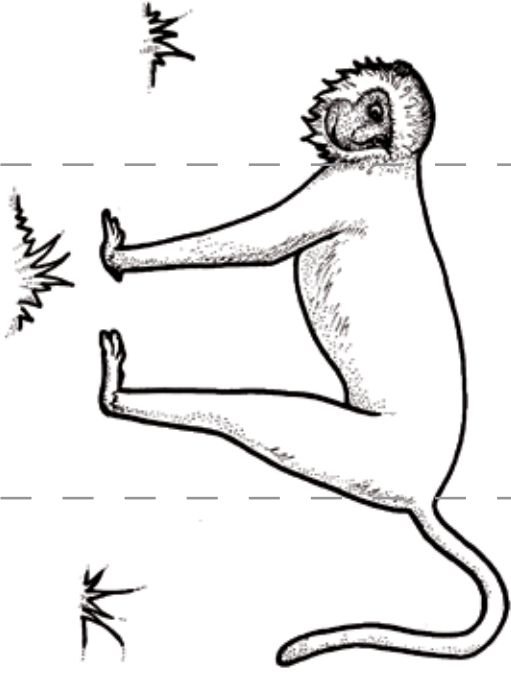
Cut along the dotted line just up to the solid gray line (spine).

Staple the pages together along the spine.

Now you can color and mix and match your animals!

Matching Game answers: 1-C: monkey; 2-A: hippo; 3-B: crocodile; 4-D: giraffe

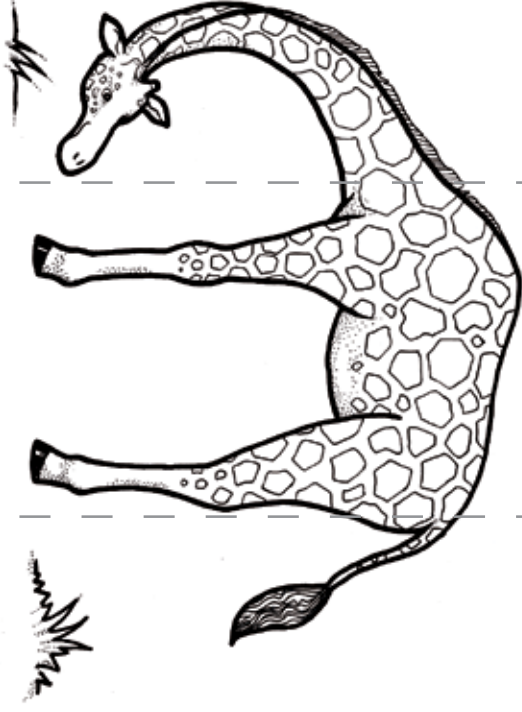




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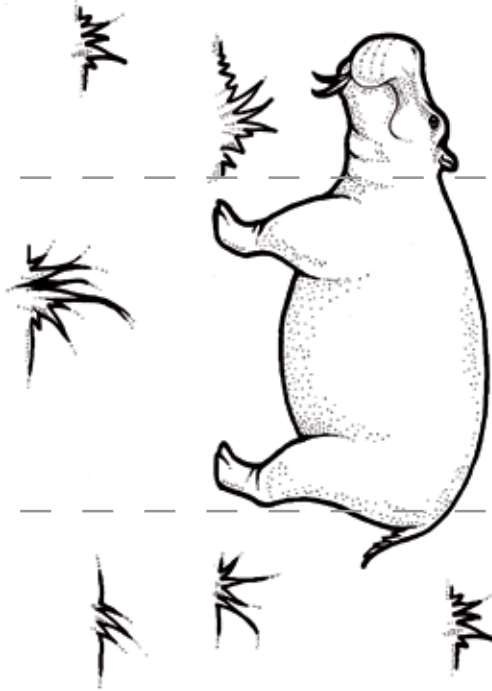
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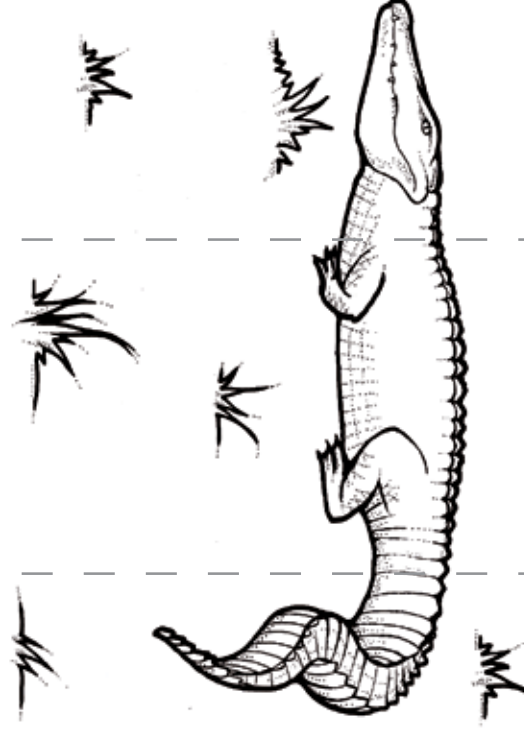
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