



Word of the Day: Mammal

Animal classification is when we group together animals that share similar traits into different categories. Classification helps scientists understand how different animals are related to each other. It is important for veterinarians to know the specific characteristics that define different groups of animals.

Many of the animals we see are called **vertebrates** because they have a backbone. Mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish are all vertebrates!

Mammals are warm-blooded animals with fur. Dogs, cats, and humans are all mammals!

Discussion Question

- What is your favorite mammal?

Examples of Mammals



Dog



Cat



Rabbit



Cow



Pig



Bat



Dolphin



Monkey



Human

Mammal Characteristics

How can you tell if an animal is a mammal?



Fur or Hair

All mammals have fur or hair on their bodies. Even whales and dolphins have whisker-like hairs on their snout when they are born, although they fall out shortly after.

Warm-Blooded

Mammals are warm-blooded, which means they can generate their own body heat. Their body temperature stays the same no matter how hot or cold their environment is.



Live Birth

Unlike other animals who lay eggs, mammals give live birth. The only exceptions are the duck-billed platypus and the echidna.

Drink Milk

When mammals are born, they drink their mothers' milk to grow and survive until they can find food on their own.



Mammal Classification

Mammals can be divided into three smaller groups:



Marsupials

Baby Pouches

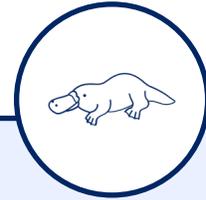
Marsupials are mammals that have pouches on their bodies to hold their babies while they grow and develop. Kangaroos and koalas are examples of marsupials.



Placentals

Baby Bellies

Placentals are the mammals most familiar to us as they include dogs, cats, and humans! Babies grow and develop inside their mother's belly instead of in a pouch like marsupials.



Monotremes

Eggs

Monotremes are the mammals that can lay eggs. The duck-billed platypus and four species of echidna are in this group.

There are many different types of **placental mammals**. Here are a few different groups below:



Rodents

Includes animals such as mice, squirrels, and porcupines.



Lagomorphs

Includes rabbits, hares, and pikas.



Bats

Includes all bat species.



Carnivores

Includes animals such as dogs, cats, tigers, bears, and sea lions.



Even-Toed

Hoofed Mammals

Includes animals such as cows, goats, pigs, camels, and hippos.



Odd-Toed

Hoofed Mammals

Includes animals such as horses, zebras, and rhinos.



Cetaceans

Includes whales, dolphins, and porpoises.



Primates

Includes animals such as monkeys, lemurs, apes, and humans.

Activities



PreK - Kindergarten

Mammal Dress-Up

Materials: faux fur, animal ear headbands, face paint

- Dressing up is a fun way to learn more about animals! Your child can explore different mammal characteristics through costume play.
- Gather different mammal costume items, such as fuzzy ear headbands, animal tails, furry claws, etc. If you have face paint at home, you can draw on mammal whiskers as well!



1st - 3rd Grade

Mammal Track Stamps

Materials: sponges, cardboard, glue, scissors, pen/marker, ink pad or non-toxic paint, paintbrush, paper

- A lot of mammals have different types of feet! Rabbit feet are very thin and long, whereas a bear paw is round and wide. Some mammals have hooves, such as horses or deer.
- Using sponges and cardboard, your child can make their very own animal tracks based on their favorite mammals.
- Cut out the animal tracks from the sponges. You can draw the footprint on the surface of the sponge before cutting.
- Glue the footprints onto a square piece of cardboard.
- Once the glue has dried, paint your new stamp and press it onto paper to create your very own mammal tracks!

Activities



All Ages

Live Mammal Cams

Materials: wifi, computer or tablet

- There are lots of fun animal cams that kids of all ages can tune into!
- The San Diego Zoo has several different live cams. Check out their Giraffe, Koala, or Platypus Cams to catch a glimpse of all three different types of mammals!
- Visit the following link to explore:
<https://sdzsafaripark.org/live-cams>