Zoo Exhibit Design

A lot of thought and time goes into designing and building the various exhibits for our Animal Ambassadors. As you walk around Brookfield Zoo look closely at the different exhibits you see.

Below, write down a couple different examples of the various aspects of the exhibits and the animals that they pertain to.

Feeders _____

Water _____

Shade _____

Enrichment (cognitive/physical stimulation) _____
_____

Levels of the exhibit (top/bottom) _____
_____

Size _____

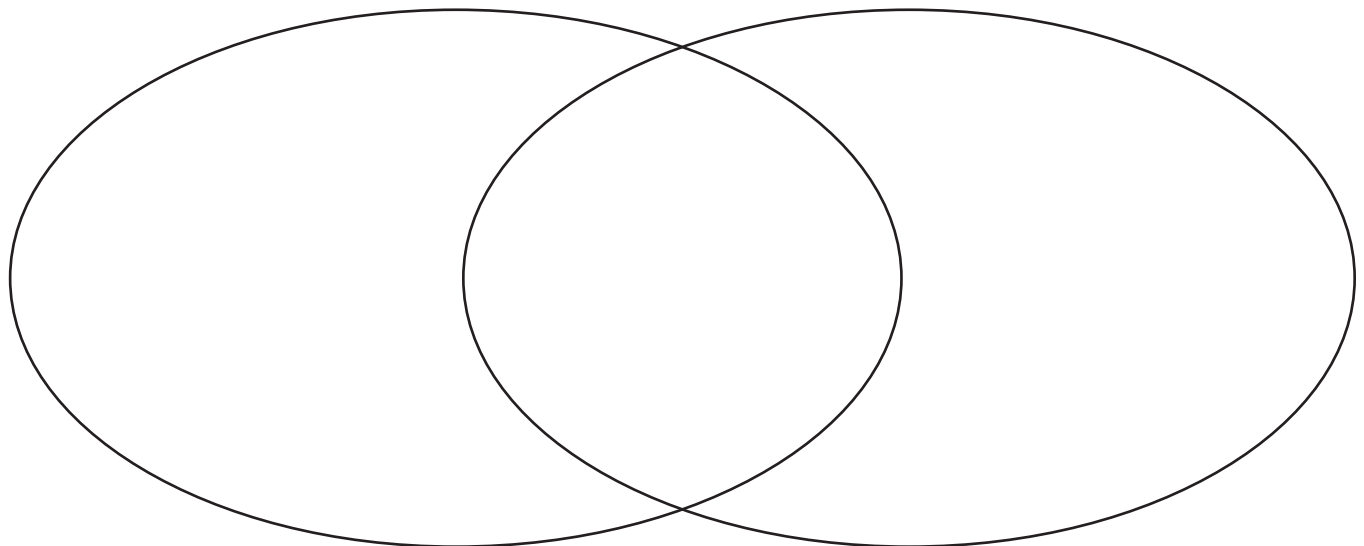Ground cover (grass, rock, gravel…) _____
_____

Brush/plant life _____

Guest viewing area _____

Informative signs _____

Now think of your favorite exhibit and any other exhibit you saw today. You are going to compare and contrast them using a Venn diagram.

_____   Both   _____

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Be a Scientist: Inquiry

Zookeepers and other animal behaviorists will observe animals in their exhibits to see how they use the various aspects in each. This helps them decide if they need to make changes to the exhibit design. You will observe the Southern Asian clawed otters in either the Fragile Rainforest or Tropic World.

The question you will be focusing on is: Will the otters spend more time in the water or on land?

Hypothesis: _____,

because _____.

Spend 3 minutes observing one of the otters to see where it spends its time. You will place a check in the appropriate box every 20 seconds. You can work with a partner so one person can keep track of the time and the other can mark observations. Place any special or interesting observations in the notes column.

Time	Water	Land	Notes
20 sec			
40 sec			
1 min			
1:20 min			
1:40 min			
2 min			
2:20 min			
2:40 min			
3 min			
Total:			

Results: What did you discover? Did your observations support your hypothesis?

_____

_____

_____

Reflection: What might have affected your results today? What might you do differently if you did this inquiry again? Can you make any connections to otters in the wild from your observations?

_____

_____

_____

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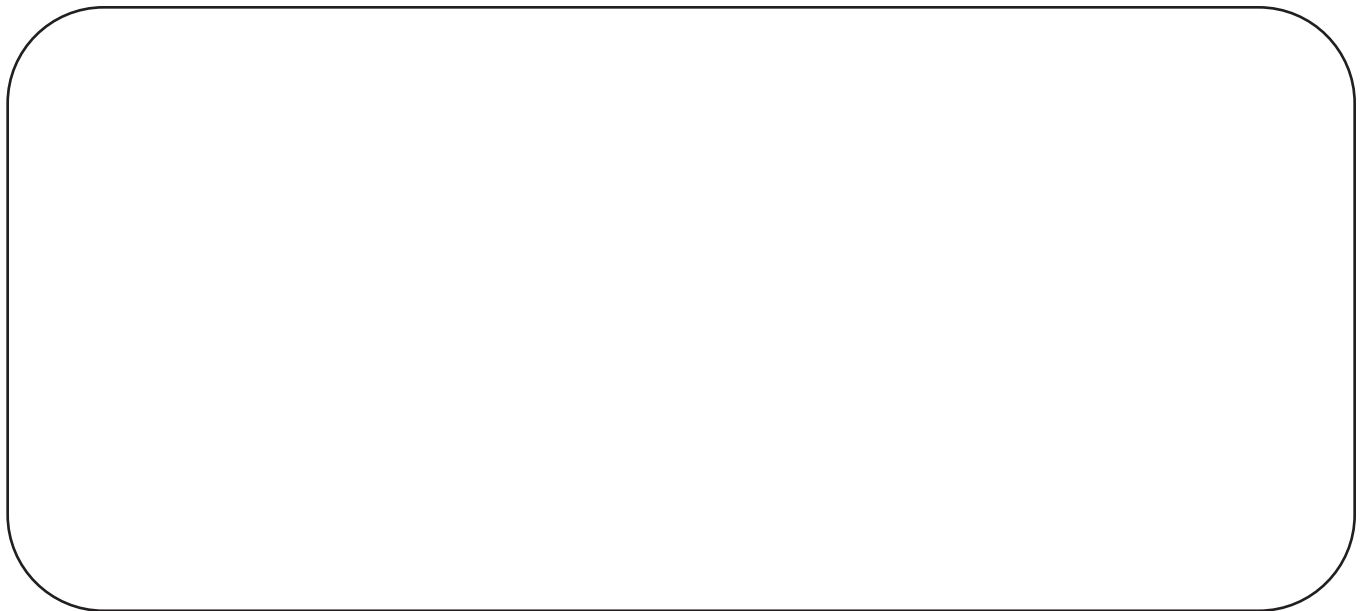
Designing an Exhibit

Try your hand in creating an exhibit for one of our animals at Brookfield Zoo!

Choose one exhibit and grade the various components on a 1-5 scale with 1 being "Could be better" and 5 being "Awesome!"

Exhibit: _____

Areas		Ranking			
Feeders	1	2	3	4	5
Water	1	2	3	4	5
Shade	1	2	3	4	5
Enrichment (cognitive/physical stimulation)	1	2	3	4	5
Levels of the exhibit (top, bottom, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Size	1	2	3	4	5
Ground cover (grass, rock, gravel…)	1	2	3	4	5
Brush/plant life	1	2	3	4	5
Guest viewing area	1	2	3	4	5
Informative signs	1	2	3	4	5

Sketch the exhibit below. Remember to include all the different features.

What would you do to improve this exhibit? Observe the animals and see how they use the current exhibit. Remember to think about what the animal eats, where they sleep, are they diurnal (awake during the day) or nocturnal (awake at night)? Is the animal a solitary or herd/group animal?

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Designing an Exhibit

Listed below are some of the factors that zoos consider when designing enclosures:
- Feeding and drinking water areas
- Shade or water that will help the animals to cool off
- Adequate space and structures for animals to climb/run/dig/swim/fly
- Areas where animals can perch, rest, nest, or have privacy from zoo visitors
- Proper lighting for nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Temperature control in the exhibit (heating and cooling)
- Safety for both animals and guests (adequate barriers between)
- Safe and efficient ways for keepers to clean the exhibit
- A positive experience for visitors; they can easily view the animals and read information about them

With all this in mind, you will now create a new design for the exhibit you chose. Make sure you consider all the factors above and any ways to keep your animal(s) active and healthy.

Sketch your design below.

Describe your exhibit. Explain the changes you made and why you made them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

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