# What to Do at Brookfield Zoo

Teachers,

Field trips are a great way for students to use their science knowledge outside of the classroom. A trip to the zoo allows students to make real life connections from their classroom curriculum. Students will remember field trips for years and will gain new information that will strengthen concepts they already know and get them excited to learn more. From young children, who are naturally curious about their surroundings and are always ready to explore, to high school students, who are starting their own exploration into their future careers, Brookfield Zoo offers countless opportunities to learn about the world around them and how they can positively impact animals and their environments throughout the globe.

These activities will help your students learn to be focused observers on your field trip. The goal of these activities is to ensure that every school group visiting the zoo has a positive educational experience. We want students to make connections and discoveries with the world around them. The activities are filled with questions that will get your students thinking and making connections among the animals and themselves. Additionally, these questions focus on unique aspects of our animals. The data charts are provided so that students can explore the materials further.

We hope these activities are beneficial to your visit and we look forward to seeing you at Brookfield Zoo!


Sincerely,
*The Education Staff at Brookfield Zoo*

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Chicago Zoological Society

Before coming to the zoo, review the grade-appropriate activities.
Make sure your students know the vocabulary terms and have a basic
understanding of the topic they will be focusing on. It is important to share
with the students some things they might see before coming to the zoo.

## Lower Elementary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adaptation** | different characteristics that help animals survive in their habitats |
| **Amphibian** | smooth, wet skin; also cold-blooded and can live on land or in water |
| **Bird** | have feathers and wings, most fly but not all; lay eggs |
| **Fish** | covered in scales and swim in lakes, rivers, and oceans |
| **Habitat** | the natural conditions and environment in which a plant or animal lives; an animal's home |
| **Mammal** | covered in fur or hair, drink milk when young |
| **Reptile** | rough, scaly skin, cold-blooded |

## Upper Elementary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adaptation** | the process of changing to fit a new environment or different conditions; both physical and behavioral characteristics that allow an organism to survive in their habitat |
| **Camouflage** | method of hiding from predators, allows organism to blend into its environment |
| **Carnivore** | animals that only eat meat |
| **Ecosystem** | consists of all the living organisms and non-living elements in a particular area |
| **Haiku** | type of Japanese poem that consists of three lines with the first and last line having 5 syllables each and seven syllables in the second line |
| **Herbivore** | animals that only eat plant materials |
| **Omnivore** | animals that eat both meat and plants |
| **Predator** | an organism that lives by preying on other organisms |
| **Prey** | animals that are hunted by other animals (predators) |

## Middle School

| | |
|---|---|
| **Enrichment** | provides stimulating and challenging environments, objects, and activities for animals that help keep them physically and mentally fit |
| **Inquiry** | a formal investigation on an observable element, like an animal, to determine something about it; compares two things and measures one |
| **Hypothesis** | an observable assumption or guess |
| **Observation** | technique of learning and gathering information by watching and viewing something |
| **Scientist** | anyone who uses the scientific method to investigate and learn about something in the natural and physical world |

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**Adaptation** the process of changing to fit a new environment or different conditions; the development of both physical and behavioral characteristics that allow an organism to survive in their habitat

**Biodiversity** degree of variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, biome, or an entire planet; measure of health in an ecosystem, more species equals healthier ecosystem

**Biome** a large geographical area of distinctive plant and animal groups, which are adapted to that particular environment; there are 7 major biomes—desert, tundra, grasslands, marine, freshwater, rainforest, and temperate forests

**Camouflage** method of hiding from predators, allows organism to blend into its environment

**Communication** method of transferring information from: one person to another by speech, gestures or writing; one animal to another by vocalizations, scents, and body positioning

**Endangered** animals at risk of becoming extinct because it is either few in numbers, or threatened by changing environments or predators

**Enrichment** provides stimulating and challenging environments, objects, and activities for animals that helps keep them physically and mentally fit

**Food Chain** linear sequence of links in a food web starting with a producer, which doesn't eat anything and ends at an animal that is eaten by no other species in the web

**Food Web** depicts feeding connections (who eats whom) in an ecological community; is more complex than a food chain

**Graph** depiction of information in a visual way that compares and contrasts the data

**Inquiry** a formal investigation on an observable element, like an animal, to determine something about it; compares two things and measures one

**Hypothesis** an observable assumption or guess

**Mimicry** is the similarity of one species to another, which protects one or both; this similarity can be in appearance, behavior, sound, scent, and even location, with the mimics found in similar places to their models

**Observation** technique of learning and gathering information by watching and viewing something

**Pack** social structure of wolves and some other canines; each pack has a social hierarchy with an alpha male and alpha female who lead the pack

**Scientist** anyone who uses the scientific method to investigate and learn about something in the natural and physical world

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