

## Living Desert Zoo Project Kit

Congratulations! You're going to the Living Desert Zoo! Use these project ideas to enrich your educational experience in the park. Read through them before you go to make sure you understand the terms and concepts, and to help you determine if you want to expand upon any of them. **You'll find fun facts and printable worksheets at the end of this packet.**

a- elementary level activity    b- middle school level activity    c- high school level activity

### **Language Arts**

Animals have language, too! Take some time to observe animals interacting with each other. How are they communicating to each other? How are they reacting to one another? Do you see positive or negative emotions in their communications? What are they trying to achieve? Is the way they are communicating effective? What can we learn from them?

- a. Draw a picture about what you see. Talk or write about it.
- b. Write a few short paragraphs about what you see. Talk about it.
- c. Write a short essay about what you see. Discuss ways in which we, as humans, can use some of our communication skills to better exist in harmony with one another. What kinds of communications should we avoid, and which should we employ more frequently?

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawing, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

### **Applied Math**

Animals eat a lot! How much animal food does the Living Desert Zoo have to purchase and prepare? How many animals live at the Living Desert Zoo? Use technology or ask a docent/keeper/employee to get estimates, and use those estimates to calculate how much money the Living Desert Zoo spends to feed its animals.

- a. Choose one animal to research how much it eats in a day. Calculate how much food it would need in a year. Draw or write about your findings.
- b. Choose one animal to research how much it eats. Calculate how much food it would need in a year, and estimate how much that food will cost. Then, multiply that figure by the number of that type of animal the Living Desert Zoo takes care of. Record your calculations.
- c. Calculate estimates of food needs for each animal, each type of animal, and all of the animals at the Living Desert Zoo. Do this per day and per year. Estimate how much that would cost. Record your calculations.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, calculator or smartphone (optional)

Submission: Your calculations, estimations, and conclusions, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

## **Science**

Animals are awesome! Zoologists study animals. Every animal has a unique life history. A “life history” is the story of an animal’s life from birth (or fertilization) to adulthood (and death). How many different ways can an animal begin it’s life? Are some animals more independent as babies than others? Why do you think this is? What about their lives affect how vulnerable they are when they are born? What kinds of animals raise their babies, and what kinds don’t? How does this affect how many babies survive to adulthood?

- a. Choose an animal to think about these questions for. Draw or write about your ideas.
- b. Discuss and diagram the unique life history of one of the animals you see. Write a paragraph about your findings.
- c. Discuss the life history of one of the animals at the Living Desert Zoo. Write a short essay on your findings. Then, explore zoology. What kinds of things does the Living Desert Zoo need to keep in mind about each animal's' life history when it is designing its living space and their plan for taking care of it? Does the Living Desert Zoo have breeding programs for any of the animals? What are they working on currently? Ask a zookeeper.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your drawings, diagrams, maps, or designs, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

## **Social Studies**

California has a rich history, and animals and plants are a part of it. Dive a little deeper into the history of some of the plants and animals you see at the Living Desert Zoo and learn more about their significance to the state and our local area.

- a. Choose one animal or plant and learn about its importance to California. How does it affect the ecosystem? How does it affect the culture? Are there any neat historical stories about it? Draw or write about what you find.
- b. Do some research on specific ways that California's native plants and animals contribute to the health and wealth of the state. Write a brief report and include the animals you studied and their importance.
- c. Explore the importance of conservation on cultures. Why is it important that areas, animals, and plants are conserved? How does conservation increase the productivity of economies? Why are plants and animals so important to our culture and society? Write down your thoughts and discuss them.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, park map

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawings, and any pictures/videos


Teaching or learning notes:

# FUN FACTS

- 1000 of the zoo's 1200 acres are still in their natural state, providing home to many desert plants and animals.
- A group of foxes is called a skulk or leash.
- Some desert animals are crepuscular. This means they are active in the early morning and evening, which have the best temperatures for hunting and travelling. Others, like bats and rodents, are completely nocturnal.
- When it comes to intelligence, the raven rates up there with chimpanzees and dolphins.
- Goats were one of the first animals to be tamed by humans and were being herded 9,000 years ago.
- The life span of a wild skunk is about three years while domesticated skunks can live up to 10 years.
- Badgers live in complex underground burrow system called 'setts' that they dig themselves. Some can be centuries old, as can the regular paths badgers use above ground!
- A group of tortoises is called a creep, but you won't see one very often because tortoises are solitary animals.
- Cougars are the largest cat that can purr.
- For Bighorn Sheep, horn size is a symbol of rank. Male horns can weigh as much as 30 lbs.
- Ducks are actually omnivores!

## The Living Desert Zoo

1. Draw a picture of your favorite animal at the zoo.



2. Describe your favorite animal, something it did while you were there, and why you love it.

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3. What is one thing you learned about mammals at the zoo?

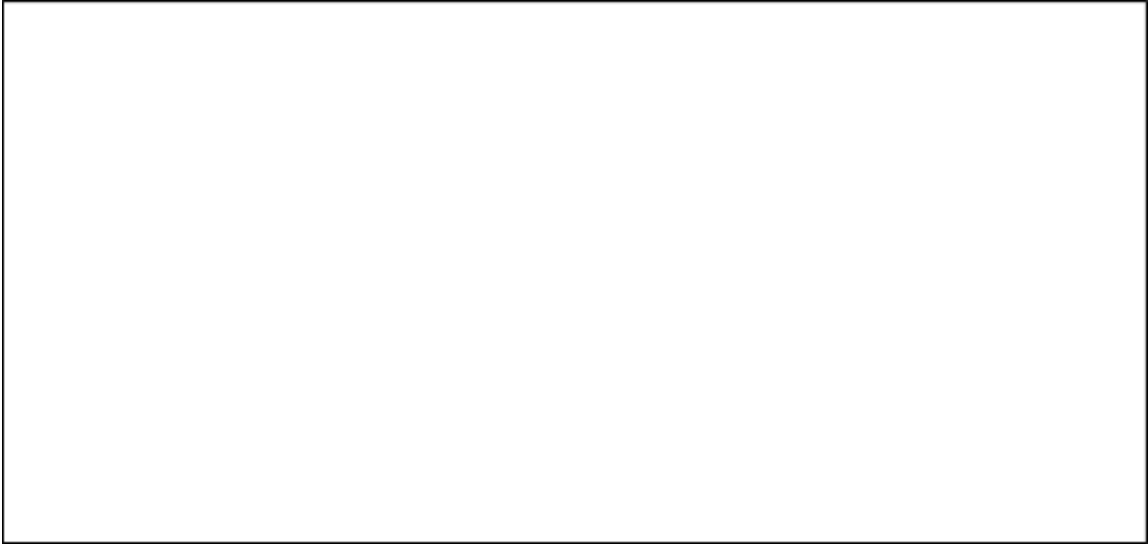
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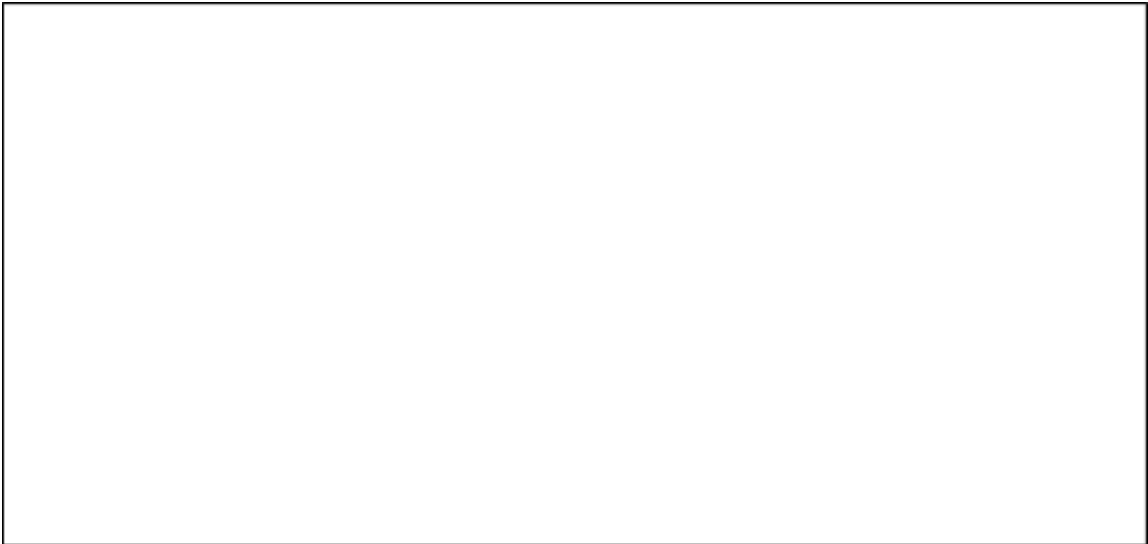
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4. Draw or describe a bird that you saw at the zoo.



5. Describe or draw a reptile you saw at the zoo.



6. What are the differences between reptiles and amphibians?

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BONUS:

Zoo Scavenger Hunt!

- Something with wings \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that hibernates \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that is bipedal \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that is blue \_\_\_\_\_
- Something with flowers \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that eats mice \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that eats fruit \_\_\_\_\_
- Something with leaves \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that is diurnal \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that lives in the water \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that likes to hide \_\_\_\_\_

