

Who Lives in the Neighborhood?



Opossums,
raccoons,
armadillos,
skunks, fox,
badgers, ringtails,
rabbits!





What is a
mammal?

Mammals are warm blooded vertebrate animals who nourish their young with milk from special mammary glands of the mother. Mammals' lower jaws are hinged directly to the skull, instead of through a separate bone. Mammals have fur or hair, and a complex brain. Mammals have sweat glands, 4 chambered heart, specialized teeth and 3 middle ear bones.

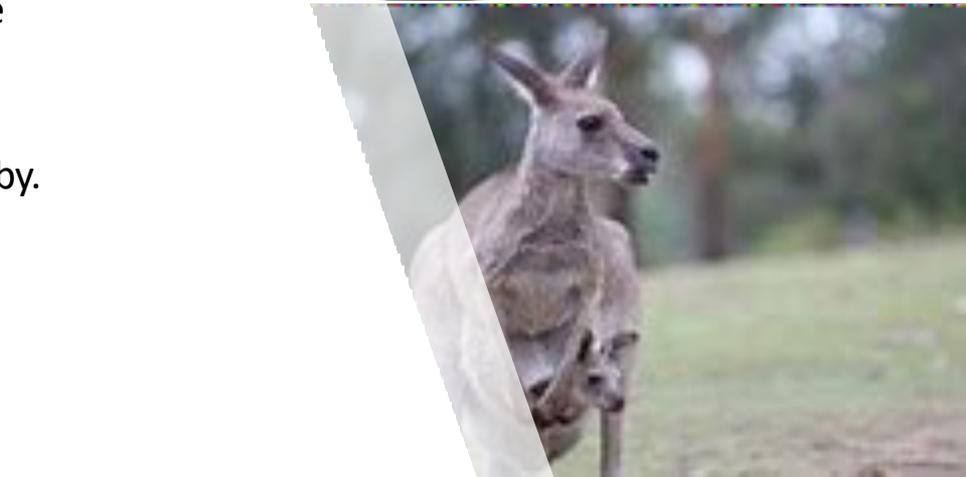
There are three types of mammals, but most are placental.

Monotremes lay eggs like the platypus. The babies develop in the egg and hatch out.

Marsupials carry their developing young in pouches like the kangaroo. The babies are born incompletely developed and live in the pouch until they are fully developed.

Most mammals are placental. The offspring grow from an egg in the mommy's belly. The baby gets nourishment and oxygen from what the mom eats and breathes, through the umbilical cord (Did you know your belly button came from the umbilical cord?) inside the placenta.

The placenta is a special organ that develops when there is a fertile egg developing into a baby.



We can ask questions and compare the different common mammals of our area.

Where do I live?

When am I active?

Am I solitary or social?

What do I eat?

How do I look?

What is special about me?

Opossum

The opossum is a marsupial like a kangaroo. Marsupial mammals grow in a pouch on the mother's belly. Opossums are omnivores with a flexible diet. They live in trees. They are generally solitary. Opossums prefer to live in hollow trees and logs, but will also shelter in wood or rock piles, cliffs and in abandoned burrows..



Raccoon

Raccoon's have very dexterous front paws, a facial mask, and ringed tail. Raccoons are social. Raccoons prefer brushy or wooded areas near streams, lakes or swamps. They are omnivores and nocturnal.



Armadillo

The Armadillo is a small, armored, mammal. The bony, scaled shell of the armadillo protects it from attacks by predators. Armadillos eat insects, berries and other invertebrates. They live in brush, scrub, woods and grass habitats. Armadillos are solitary and generally active at night. The armadillo is the Texas State Small Animal.



Skunks

Skunks are a medium-sized, mammal with a white stripe on either side of its back extending up over the head and down the sides of its bushy tail. Two large scent glands near the base of the tail produce the skunk's strong scent, or musk. Skunks are nocturnal and social. They live in woody, brushy areas and farmlands. They are omnivores eating plants, animals and invertebrates.



Fox

The gray fox is mainly gray, with some red, black and white accents. The red fox is mainly orange and red with some black and white accents. Fox are arboreal and can climb trees. Their eyes have vertical slits. Fox are very social and primarily nocturnal. They are omnivores eating both animals and plants.



Badger

Badgers are stocky animals with short, bushy tails, short legs and long, shaggy fur with a white stripe extending from its nose to its shoulders. The back feet have five toes, and the front feet have long, thick claws an inch or more in length. Badgers are fossorial--they burrow underground, using their long, thick front claws, and kicking out dirt with their back claws. Badgers eat small mammals, birds, invertebrates, and dead things. Badgers are nocturnal and social, living in a cete or clan, and prefer open habitat.



Ringtails

Ringtails look like a fox with a long black and white striped tail nearly as long as their body and black eye rings. They are solitary nocturnal omnivores, preferring to live in rocky areas.



Rabbits

Cottontail rabbits are buff-brown with black and white accents, long ears and a small tail like a cotton ball. They re-ingest (eat) their pellets. They eat grass, plants, bark and twigs. They prefer brushy areas and are solitary and nocturnal.



Coyote

Coyotes look like a small gray or buff German Shepherd with long, thin legs, a bushy tail with a black tip, yellow eyes and large ears held erect. They are very adaptive omnivores preferring to re-purpose abandoned dens or burrows. They live in family groups and are nocturnal.



Many Merry Mammals

Mammal mommies give milk, (drinking motion)

All mammals are hairy, (touching hair)

Some mammals lay eggs, (fingers forming an oval)

Or use pouches to carry! (patting tummy)





You can sing the
mammal song and act
out the motions!

I'm a mammal, hairy
mammal (touching hair)

And my mommy nurses
me. (drinking motion)

I have a backbone, I'm
warm-blooded (touching
spine)

With a complex brain you
see! (pointing to head)



Hairy or furry

I'm a mammal, hairy
mammal



Mothers nurse the
young.

And my mommy nurses
me.



Warm-blooded
vertebrate

I have a backbone, I'm
warm-blooded



With a complex brain you
see!

Intelligent



You can cut out the pictures....



....to play the diurnal/nocturnal and social/solitary games!



When am I active?

Diurnal=active during the day

Nocturnal=active at night



Am I a loner or social?

Social=with several others of their species



Solitary= alone except for mating



Where do I like to hang out?

Rocks



Grassland



Forests



Brush



What do I like to eat?

Animals



plants

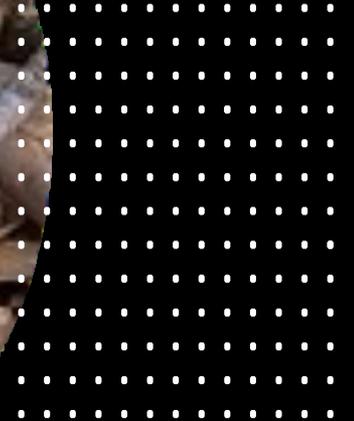
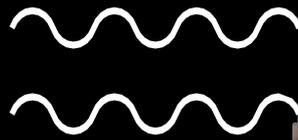


insects



You can be a mammal detective!

Take a walk around your house—can you find signs of mammals—tracks, vegetation browsed, droppings?



You can be a
mammal
maker!

You can design your own
mammal using things you
find around the house!



You can
create an
omnivore
menu!



You can
create a
neighborhood
mammal
snack!



Over in the Forest

Come and Take a Peek

By Marianne Berkes
Illustrated by Jill Dubin

388

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Animals in our neighborhood!

You can make a mini-book!

1. Fold the paper in half
2. Then in half again.

