

# Stripes and Quills



Skunks, badgers and porcupines

# Animals have different ways to protect themselves

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- Warning
- Biting
- Quills





# Badgers

The badger is a member of the weasel family with a wide body and short legs, and a white stripe from nose to shoulders. They are excellent diggers. They are ferocious with long and sharp claws.

Badgers possess a scent gland with a strong musk odor. The badger occupies a variety of habitats preferring large open land. Badgers are solitary except in mating season.



Skunks are social and nocturnal. They prefer wooded, brushy or farm land.

Five species of skunks are found in Texas, hooded skunk, spotted, striped, and two species of hog-nosed skunks. Skunks are depicted as black with broad, white stripes from the top of its head to the tip of its tail, but this description fits only the hog-nosed and the relatively rare Gulf Coast hog-nosed skunks in Texas. A small white spot on its forehead and another in front of each ear gives the spotted skunk its name. Four stripes extend from its head to its back with white stripes and spots found on other parts of its body. The striped skunk has a white stripe from the top of its head, splitting at the neck, and extending down each side of its body. The width of this stripe and the amount of white on the tail may vary from one skunk to another. Insects and grubs make up half of a skunk's year-round diet. Mice and other rodents are one-fourth of the diet, and vegetable matter one-tenth. A mix of spiders, reptiles, amphibians, birds and their eggs, millipedes, and centipedes may be included. Two musk contain the foul-smelling clear, golden-yellow sulphide fluid-- n-butyl mercaptan. The odor of this liquid discourages most enemies, but it also burns and stings when it touches the skin



## Porcupines are solitary.

The porcupine is bowlegged and pigeon-toed and moves slowly. They have modified hairs, needle-sharp quills. The stiffest, longest, and most numerous quills are found on the back and tail. Those on the sides are more flexible. Quills generally lie flat, hidden under a layer of long guard hairs, but when disturbed or threatened, the quills stand erect. Each quill can be raised or lowered instantly. When a porcupine senses danger, it lifts its quills into the vertical position, waggles its tail, and whirls around and presents its prickly backside to the enemy. With teeth chattering and tail thrashing, it advances in a backward position. Each quill has thousands of overlapping, diamond-shaped, backward-pointing scales which are what hold the quill in the enemy's flesh. They lie flat as the quill enters, but in the warmth and moisture of the wound, the scales flare open, making easy removal difficult. Porcupines feed in treetops. Porcupines prefer rocky areas, ridges, and slopes, where crevices and caves provide den sites and large





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## Protection variety

sing to *Jingle Bells*

Badgers have sharp teeth and claws  
(touching teeth and nails)

and skunks have smells to spray,  
(touching nose)

And porcupines have pointy quills  
(pointer fingers touching)

To chase the threat away! Hey!  
(hands separating)

Repeat all 4 lines.



# What's distinctive?

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Porcupines and stinky skunks  
(touching nose)

Ferocious badgers, dangerous too,  
(touching teeth)

Stripes and quills will let us know  
them, (drawing open had across  
chest)

But don't let them close to you!  
(shaking finger "no")

Sing to *Clementine*



# Stripes and quills fun!

Take a walk around the park; are there places a skunk, badger or porcupine might like to live?

Could you make a porcupine out of play doh and toothpicks?

How about a skunk snack using black and white frosting gel?



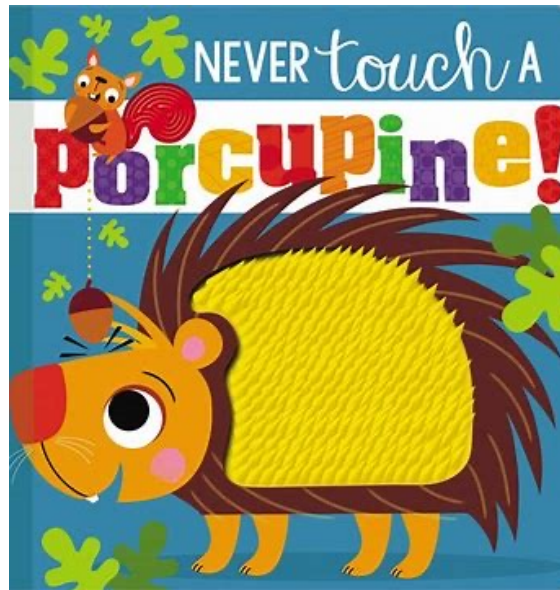


# FACTS ABOUT THE BADGER

A PICTURE BOOK FOR KIDS



Lisa Strattin



# FACTS ABOUT THE SKUNK

A PICTURE BOOK FOR KIDS



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