

Amazing animal facts and 'fings' to do!



Mole

Size: From nose to tail, about 19 cm long

Found in the Northern Hemisphere, moles exist in large numbers but are seldom seen. This is because they are underground dwellers. They have small but muscular bodies, with large, shovel-like front feet. They also have tiny, squinty eyes, but sight is not important to an animal that spends its day underground. They just burrow and burrow, digging underground tunnels that can be as long as 70 metres.

ACTIVITY: Visit <<http://www.transpenninetrail.org.uk/template.asp?ID=738&parentID=722>> to read information about moles and to download a mole mask to make. Have students cut out holes for eyes and add string or elastic to secure to the head. They then glue dark blue or purple cellophane paper over the eye holes on the reverse side of the mask. Have the class use the dark masks to look around the classroom at familiar things and view them the same way a mole would.

Sloth

Size: From 50 to 60 cm in length, with claws about 8 cm long

Mainly found in the rainforests of Central and South America, traditional names for this beast translate to words like 'filthy', 'hungry', 'lazy' and 'sleepy'—but, most of all, sloths are known for being slow. When awake (they sleep for about 20 hours each day), they travel at a speed of about three metres a minute when climbing, and two meters a minute when on the ground. If in danger, a sloth can speed up to an amazing four meters a minute.

ACTIVITY: Have the students write the words 'As slow as a sloth' at the top of a sheet of paper. Ask students to read the phrase and to explain what they think it means. (You may need to help the students with this, explaining what a simile is and giving other simple examples; e.g. 'As cross as a crocodile'.) Then ask them to write as many animal-themed similes as they can think of under the heading. The students could collaborate in pairs to assist each other. The student(s) that write(s) the most could be awarded the title 'As wise as an owl'. Ensure that the students write similes that are factually correct. Finally, ask the students to choose their favourite simile and draw a cartoon for it.



Chameleon

Size: Species vary greatly in size, from 3.3 cm to 68.5 cm in length

A type of lizard, chameleons have feet shaped like that of a parrot and their eyes have the ability to look in separate directions at the same time. However, what they are best known for is their ability to change colour. Not all species can do this, but certain types can change a variety of colours, including green, red, orange, purple, yellow and plain old brown. Some use this as a way to camouflage (disguise) themselves, while others change colour to show their emotional state (like turning a darker shade when angry).

ACTIVITY: Using two primary colours such as red and blue, red and yellow, or blue and yellow, students drop edicol dye onto sheets of art paper, so the colours overlap and mix to some extent. Allow each to dry. When dry, and using a photograph of a chameleon as a reference, students draw and cut out an outline of a chameleon. On a second sheet of paper, using the same coloured dyes, ask the students to paint a suitable background for their chameleons. When dry, attach the chameleons to the backgrounds, gluing by the feet only and ensuring the body remains free and raised above the paper.



Albatross

Size: Length of up to 1.35 m and wingspan of up to 3.5 metres

Though albatrosses can find it difficult to take off, especially if there is no wind, once in flight they can travel enormous distances. Because of their tremendous wing size they do not need to flap them much, but instead simply use wind currents to glide for distances of up to 1800 km (for the northern royal albatross). During this time, their heartbeat decreases and they can even fall asleep while still silently using currents of warm and cool air to keep in flight.

ACTIVITY: Visit <<http://www.howcast.com/videos/157-How-To-Make-a-Paper-Glider>> to follow instructions to make a paper glider. Encourage students to decorate their gliders with drawings of feathers, beak, eyes, colouring etc. to turn them into albatrosses. Next, hold a competition to see who can make their albatross/glider travel furthest. Making sure that all competitors start at the same spot, use a long tape measure to calculate the winner. Maybe hold a few heats, selecting the winner and runner-up from each, before the big final.

Finally, have students attempt to make their own paper albatrosses, using different types of paper stock and different folding designs, to see if anyone can improve the distance their albatross covers.



Amazing animals quiz

Tallest? Heaviest? Fastest? Its young is called a calf?
Which amazing animals are the answers to this quiz?
See how you score out of 10!

1. What animal is the tallest? _____ (1 pt)

2. Tick which of these three animals is the heaviest. (1 pt)

hippopotamus elephant rhinoceros

3. What is the world's fastest animal:

(a) on land? _____ (1 pt)

(b) in water? _____ (1 pt)

(c) in the air? _____ (1 pt)

4. Tick which bird lays the largest egg. (1 pt)

goose pelican ostrich



5. What is the world's largest:

(a) fish? _____ (1 pt)

(b) mammal? _____ (1 pt)

6. Tick which animal's young is called a calf. (1 pt)

dolphin bear horse



7. Tick which animal does not have quills. (1 pt)

echidna hedgehog tortoise

How did you go?

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Score								/10

Indicator: Researches to find answers to quiz questions about animals. (delete before photocopying) Answers: 1. giraffe 2. elephant 3. cheetah, sailfish, peregrine falcon 4. ostrich 5. whale shark, blue whale 6. dolphin 7. tortoise