

# What is a Mammal?

*Overview:* Students will discuss the importance of animal classes. A list of the main animal classes will be provided to identify the words. They will learn the characteristics of mammals and learn to distinguish them from other animal classes. A list of the broad characteristics of mammals will be provided for the children to review.

**Grade Levels:** Pre-K - 3

**Subjects:** Science  
Language Arts

**Concepts:** Scientists group animals into classes because it makes it easier to study them.

**Skills:** Observing  
Analyzing  
Categorizing

**Materials:** Handout and worksheet provided in this guide.

**NGSS:**

- K-ESS3-1 > Disciplinary Core Ideas in Earth and Space Sciences > ESS3.A: Natural Resources
- 3-LS3-1 > Disciplinary Core Ideas in Life Sciences > LS3.B: Variation of Traits
- 3-LS3-1 > Crosscutting Concepts > Patterns

## **Getting Ready**

First, provide each student with the Animal Classes handout. Discuss at length the purpose of classifying animals and the characteristics of each class.

Second, pass out the Mammals worksheet, in which the students have to identify the mammals and cross out the animals that belong to a different class.

## **Assessment**

Complete the Mammal worksheet provided in this guide.

## **Enrichment**

Ask students to provide other examples of mammals with interesting characteristics:

Why are dolphins mammals since they don't have hair or fur in adulthood?  
What are the only mammals that lay eggs?  
What is the only mammal that truly flies?



# Vocabulary

Animal class: a group of animals that share important characteristics.

Mammal: a type of animal that has hair/fur, is endothermic, has a backbone, and feeds milk secreted by mammary glands to its young.

Reptile: an animal that is cold blooded (exothermic), lays eggs, and has a body covered with scales or hard parts.

Amphibian: an animal (such as a frog or toad) that can live both on land and in water. When they are first born, they have an aquatic gill-breathing larval stage before typically developing into lung-breathing adults.

Arthropods: an animal that has more than four jointed legs. Insects, spiders, and crustaceans all belong to this class of animals.

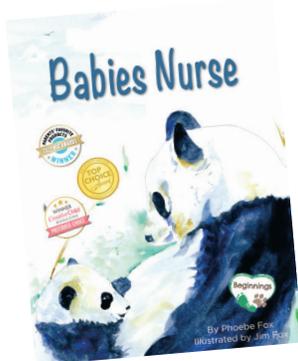
Birds: an animal that has wings and is covered with feathers.

Fish: an animal that lives in water and has gills, scales, and fins on their body.

## Mammal Characteristics

Most mammals:

- bear live young
- maintain a constant body temperature despite changing climatic conditions (warm-blooded, or, endothermic),
- have differentiated teeth
- have four limbs (two legs and two arms, four legs, or a pair of flippers and fins)
- have a backbone with seven vertebrae



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# Animal Classes Handout



Mammal: an animal that has hair/fur, is endothermic, has a backbone, and feeds milk secreted by mammary glands to its young.

ex. horses, dogs, humans



Amphibian: an animal (such as a frog or toad) that can live both on land and in water. When they are first born, they have an aquatic gill-breathing larval stage before typically developing into a lung-breathing adult.

ex. frogs, toads, salamanders



Reptile: an animal that is cold blooded, lays eggs, and has a body covered with scales or hard parts.

ex. turtles, crocodiles, snakes



Fish: an animal that lives in water and has gills, scales, and fins on their body.

ex. goldfish, carp, sharks



Bird: an animal that has wings and is covered with feathers.

ex. eagles, robins, flamingos



Arthropod: an animal that has more than four jointed legs.

ex. bees, spiders, crabs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Identify the Mammals Worksheet

**Directions:** Identify the mammals and cross out the animals that belong to a different class.

**REMEMBER!** A mammal is a type of animal that has hair/fur, is endothermic, has a backbone, and feeds milk secreted by mammary glands to its young.

