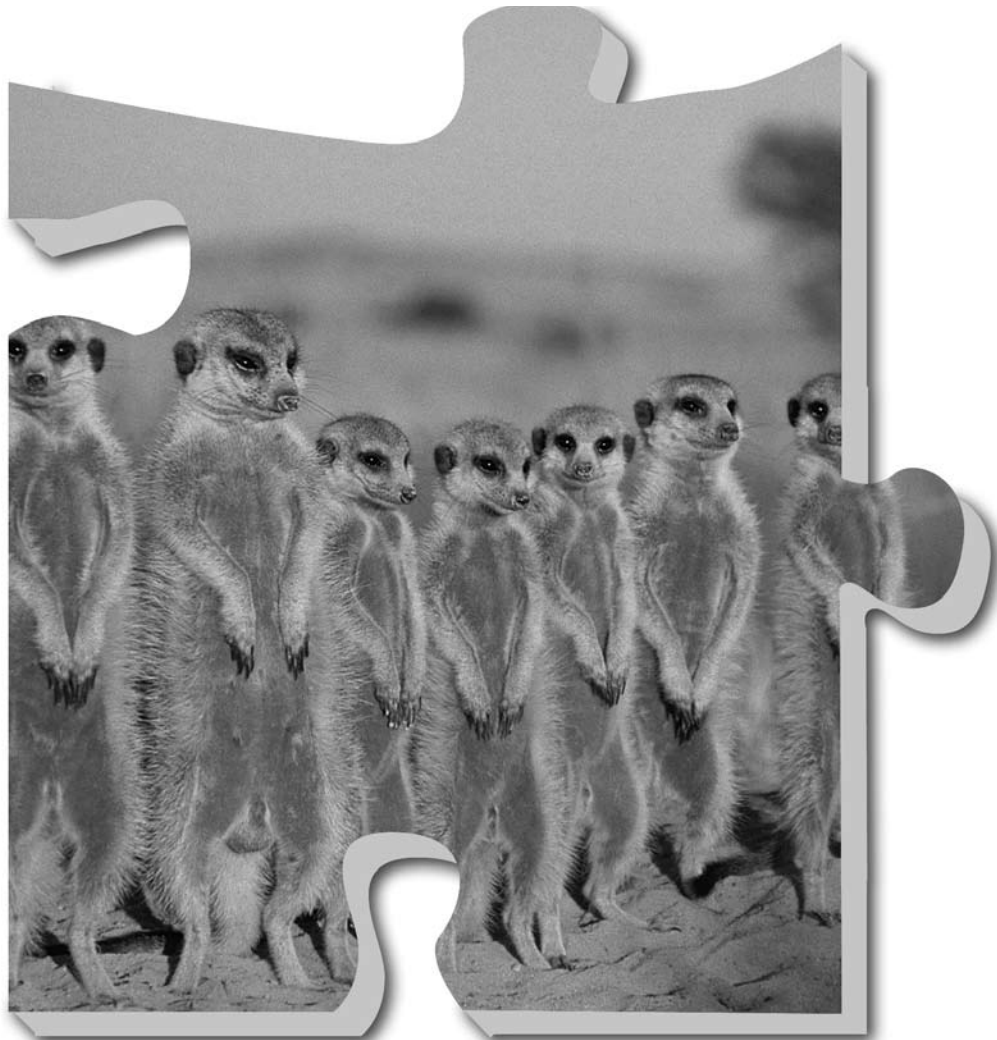




MEERKATS



(800) 295-5010



Disney's ANIMAL WORLD

MEERKATS

Objectives

The student in grades K-2 will:

- Become familiar with the physical characteristics of meerkats
- Learn how meerkats adapt to their environment
- Be introduced to the behavior of meerkats and their offspring

Synopsis

Through live-action footage, students observe wild meerkats in Africa. Clips from Disney animated movies and TV shows such as *Timon and Pumbaa's Wild Adventures* further illustrate key facts about these slim, playful insectivores. Students learn that meerkats aren't actually related to cats, but are in the mongoose family. Petite meerkats can make tasty snacks for a variety of predators, so they protect themselves by living in colonies. Students discover that meerkat sentries guard the colony's underground burrows and alert fellow colonists when predators approach. Students also learn that meerkat babysitters keep the kittens from wandering while their parents are foraging for food. Two short, fun quizzes help students focus on what they've learned.

Preview Questions

1. If you saw the movie *The Lion King*, do you remember Simba's friend Timon the meerkat? Do you remember what foods Timon and his pal Pumbaa the warthog teach Simba to eat?
2. Do you know what a meerkat looks like? Do you think it looks like a pet cat? In what part of the world do you think meerkats live? (Hint: Lions live there, too.)

Suggested Activities

1. Read students a picture book on meerkats. Nonfiction children's books on this topic include *Meerkats* by Robyn Weaver (Capstone Press, 1998). Fiction stories include *Meerkat in Trouble* by Adrienne Kennaway (Happy Cat Books, 2002). Invite students to tell about parts of the book that reminded them of facts they learned from the meerkats episode of *Disney's Animal World*.



- Have students recall that meerkats live in underground tunnels called burrows. Tell them that animals such as rabbits, prairie dogs, and gophers also dig burrows to live in. Work with students to make a chart such as the one below that lists special names for the homes of animals.

Animal	Home
meerkat	burrow
bird	nest
spider	web
fox	den

- Help students brainstorm a list of animals that live in groups to help one another survive. Examples: honeybees, prairie dogs, elephants, and meerkats. Read students a few illustrated nonfiction books such as *Honeybees* by Deborah Heiligman (National Geographic Society, 2002), *Peeking Prairie Dogs* by Christine Zuchora-Walske (Lerner Publishing Group, 1999) and *African Elephants* by Roland Smith (Lerner Publishing Group, 1995). Then lead a discussion on the ways these animals are similar. For example, when they live in groups, some animals have special jobs such as guarding the group, babysitting, or looking for food.
- To help students draw meerkat characters similar to Timon, obtain a copy of *How to Draw The Lion King* by David Pacheco and Diana Walkman (Walter Foster Publications, 1995). Students might enjoy inventing their own meerkat characters and thinking of names for them.
- Remind students that meerkats live in groups called colonies. Inform them that meerkat groups are also called gangs or mobs. Help them brainstorm a list of other special words for animal groups. Examples: a herd of elephants, a pride of lions, a flock of birds. Students might use the words in simple sentences such as: A mob of meerkats rested in the sun. Encourage them to draw pictures to go with their sentences.
- Help students complete a chart such as the one below that tells how the special physical characteristics of meerkats help them survive.

Special parts of a meerkat's body	How they help meerkats survive
dark rings around their eyes	work like sunglasses to help them see in the bright sun
claws that are always out	help them dig their burrows
back legs	help them stand up so they can see enemies
tail	helps them balance when they are standing up



On the DVD

Scene Selection

The program on this DVD is divided into 5 chapters. This allows the user to enter at different points in the program.

- Chapter 1: Sentries of Southern Africa
- Chapter 2: Quiz Time 1
- Chapter 3: Colony Life
- Chapter 4: Quiz Time 2
- Chapter 5: Teamwork

DVD Activities

These classroom activities, found on the DVD, include relevant short scenes from the program.

Habitats

The area where an animal lives is called its habitat. Describe the habitat of the meerkat. Think of your favorite animal. What is its habitat? Go to the library to find out more about the habitats of your favorite animals.

Teamwork

Meerkats live together in colonies and each member has its own job. One job is to be a lookout or sentry. What other jobs do you think members of the colony would have? Draw your imaginary colony of busy meerkats.

Additional Resources

Disney Educational Productions

<http://www.Edustation.Disney.com>

This award-winning site contains additional activities and resources for use with this DVD.

Wikipedia: Meerkat

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meerkat>

This site contains, facts, photos, references and habitat maps.

San Diego Zoo

<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/t-meerkat.html>
Information about meerkats.

San Diego Zoo

http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/syd_monty_intro.html
Introduction to Monty Meerkat.

