

# What Kind of Mammal is it?

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to classify which mammals are companion animals and which are wild animals.

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Students will learn about the characteristics of a mammal and they'll be able to define what a mammal is. They'll also learn the difference between a companion animal and a wild animal and will use the attached worksheet to test their knowledge.

## MATERIALS:

🐾 Worksheet: "What Kind of Mammal is it?"

## ACTIVITY:

### Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 What's a "mammal?" Webster's Dictionary defines a mammal as "Any of various warm-blooded vertebrate animals of the class Mammalia, including human beings, characterized by a covering of hair on the skin and, in the female, milk-producing mammary glands for nourishing the young. Young are born alive."
- 🐾 Ask for examples of mammals. What are some mammals that you have seen before? List them on the chalkboard.
- 🐾 How does having hair protect a mammal's body?
- 🐾 Why do female mammals produce milk?
- 🐾 How's a "live" birth different than a bird that lays eggs?

### Procedure

Discuss that there are different ways to classify mammals. Some mammals can be classified as "companion animals." Define "companion animal." Ask for examples of mammals that are companion animals (pets) and what types of pets the students have at home. Make a list of companion animals on the chalkboard. Define "wild animal." Discuss that some mammals can be classified as "wild animals." Ask the students for examples of mammals that are wild animals. What types of wild animals live in their neighborhood or around the school? Make a list of wild animals on the chalkboard. How are the companion animals different than the wild animals, even though they're both mammals?

Pass out the worksheet, "What Kind of Mammal is it?" Have the students classify the mammals on the worksheet as companion animals or wild animals.

### Post-Discussion

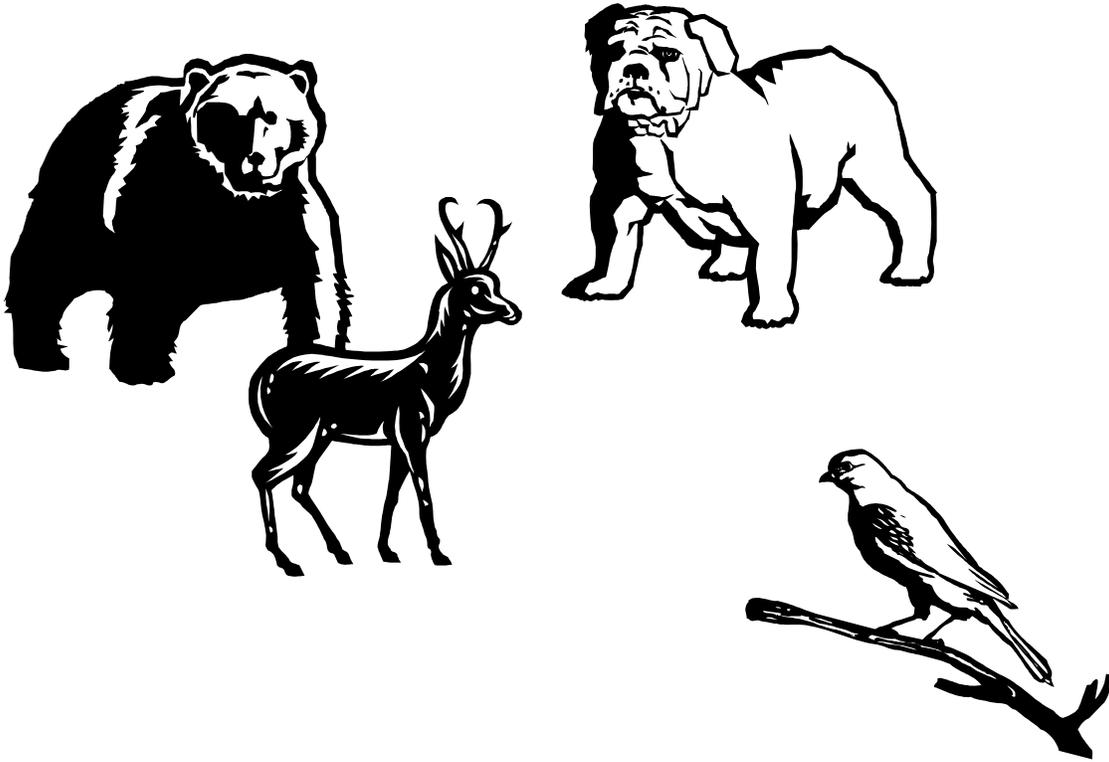
- 🐾 Why is it important to know if a mammal is a companion animal or a wild animal?
- 🐾 Can a companion animal ever become wild? A companion animal, like a dog, has been domesticated for approximately 14,000 years and it depends on people for all of its needs. It cannot survive in the wild.
- 🐾 Can a wild animal ever become a companion animal or pet? No, it takes thousands of years to domesticate a species.
- 🐾 If a wild animal, such as a squirrel, fox or raccoon, lives close to your home, can it be considered a companion animal? Even though many wild animals have adapted to living among people, they're still wild and should be treated as such.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Discuss other types of "vertebrates," such as fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds.

# What Kind of Mammal is it?

Each mammal listed can be classified as a "companion animal" or a "wild animal." Write which kind it is on the blank line..



1. dog \_\_\_\_\_

2. wolf \_\_\_\_\_

3. cat \_\_\_\_\_

4. gorilla \_\_\_\_\_

5. coyote \_\_\_\_\_

6. gerbil \_\_\_\_\_

7. squirrel \_\_\_\_\_

8. guinea pig \_\_\_\_\_

9. raccoon \_\_\_\_\_

10. mountain lion \_\_\_\_\_

11. deer \_\_\_\_\_

12. hamster \_\_\_\_\_

13. bear \_\_\_\_\_

14. puppy \_\_\_\_\_

15. sparrow \_\_\_\_\_