

Animal Care

6-8 Post-Activity

Lesson Summary

Students will refer to information about tigers in order to design enrichment with its specific features, behaviors, and history in mind.

Objectives

Students will be able to refer to text to extract important details

Students will be able to use information to make inferences

Students will be able to consider information to use in design

Essential Question

What does an animal need to survive and how does a zoo provide that?

Materials

- Amur Tiger Information Sheet (provided at the end of the lesson)
- Access to the [Philly Zoo website](#) (or other research resources)
- Scrap paper (or worksheet such as provided at the end of the lesson)
- Writing utensils

Prep

1. 1 Hour before: Print out informational text (1 for each student) and worksheets as needed (1 for each student)

Key Terms

- **Zookeeper:** The person/people responsible for the daily care animals that live at the zoo for conservation purposes
- **Veterinarian:** A doctor for animals.
- **Basic Needs:** All living things including animals need food, water, and shelter to survive and these are called their basic needs. Different animals have different types of specific needs.
- **Hygiene:** The practice of keeping clean, for example a habitat to ensure health and prevent sickness for one's self or another being.
- **Diet:** The specific types and amounts of food and drink eaten and drunk by an animal.
- **Enrichment:** Practices or items that improve the quality care for animals, by encouraging natural behaviors and simultaneously exercising the bodies and minds of the animals.
- **Training:** The practice of teaching an animal a specific behavior or skills for enrichment and for the benefit or their care.
- **Choice:** The act of animals being able to decide if they want to participate in training or not.
- **Husbandry:** The care of animals including observing to monitor health, cleaning to ensure hygiene, preparing and providing diets, training for care and enrichment.

Background

Animal Care is a full team effort. Many people are involved in making sure every animal is taken care of in a safe and healthy environment, is given all of the necessary basic needs, and is provided enrichment as well. Although

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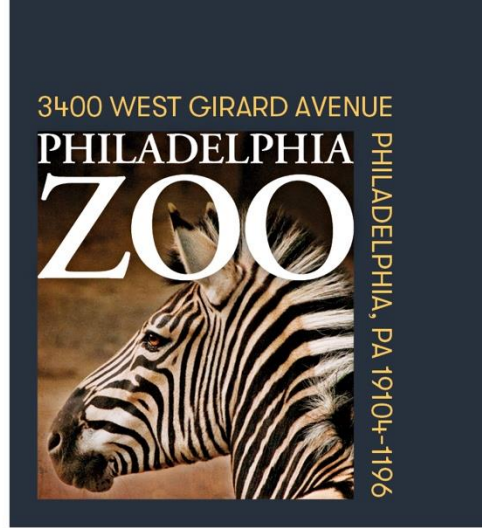


many people think of zookeepers and veterinarians as the main animal caretakers at a Zoo, many different people and careers are important. This also includes nutritionists, curators, scientific researchers, maintenance, and many more! For example, The Philadelphia Zoo has a nutritionist on staff that helps ensure that every single animal at the zoo is getting the proper diet, with all of the vitamins and nutrients needed to help keep them healthy.

Those that work in animal care are animal advocates and protectors, striving to give these animals the best life possible in the name of conservation. They work together and collaborate to make sure that their animals basic needs are met every day, but also their mental wellbeing. They take observations to make decisions on how to maintain safety for the animals, proper type and amount of food, hygiene, and enrichment.

Implementation

1. Excite: Ask students if to consider a new gift they could provide to a friend. What is it about that friends that they kept in mind when determining an appropriate gift for them? Likely, students considered that person's likes and dislikes.
2. Explore: Ask students to consider how similar thought processes might go into providing something to animal. Is there a way to know if that animal liked or disliked that thing?
3. Ask students to consider how they would find out or learn what things to give to an animal.
4. Explain: Share with students that an important part of taking care of animals at the Zoo is not only research of a species, but research and understanding of the individual! In order to keep the animals in their care healthy, zookeepers also provide animals enrichment – objects or activities that encourage natural behaviors and exercise minds and bodies. Natural history and natural behaviors are certainly important factors in determining what would be appropriate for the animal. However, sometimes it also takes creativity and experimentation to see if the animal has particular likes and dislikes that also contribute to their welfare.
5. Elaborate: Share with students that they will be using information to create something for an animal based on their basic needs, typical behaviors, and individual characteristics. Provide students with the Amur Tiger Information Sheet and invite them to highlight, annotate, or take notes of the text. Students should pay particular attention to the parts of the texts that might inform what would be appropriate enrichment for this animal.
6. After reviewing the provided information, invite students to consider some ways in which they could provide this animal enrichment. What would they want to focus on? What could the enrichment look like that would achieve this goal? How often could or should this enrichment be provided to this animal for their best benefit? Invite the students to consider these questions and design enrichment with drawing and an explanation on a separate sheet of paper.
7. After students have had some time to design enrichment for this Amur Tiger, ask them to consider how they would be able to test if this was appropriate or effective enrichment for this animal.



- Evaluate: Ask the class to review what the purpose of enrichment is and to provide some examples.

Expansion

If students visited the Zoo, encourage them to consider their observations from the animal exhibits as inspiration for items that could be used in different ways in enrichment.

Provide students materials to build their designs and give them an opportunity to test them as well. Consider giving them specific parameters they have to follow in order to design and build this enrichment.

Allow students the opportunity to learn about other animals through the Zoo's website and determine similar or different enrichment that would be suitable for different animals.

Additional Resources

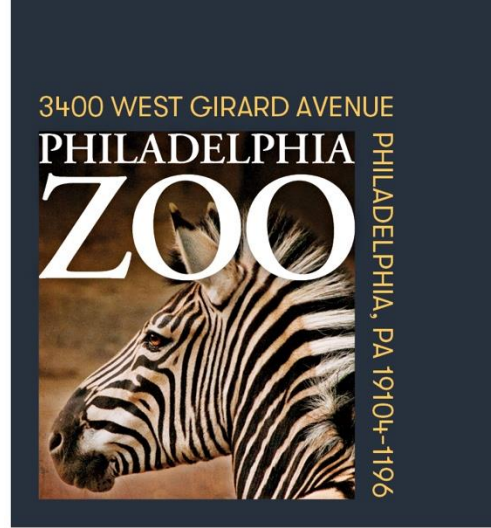
[Ask a Keeper](#)

[Behind-the-scenes with a Veterinarian](#)

[Behind-the-scenes with a Nutritionist](#)

Curriculum References

4.3.7.B



Amur Tiger

Who do we have at the Zoo?

Koosaka (female) - born May 24, 2007 at the Philadelphia Zoo in Philadelphia, PA

Dmitri (male) - born June 28, 2012 at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in Columbus, OH and arrive at the Philadelphia Zoo on January 10, 2014

Wiz (male) - born June 29, 2012 at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in Columbus, OH and arrive at the Philadelphia Zoo on January 10, 2014

What is their average weight?

Average weight for males is about 400 lbs and for females about 260 lbs

Where are they found in the wild?

They are found in isolated forests across eastern Asia. In summer they live at an altitude of about 3900 feet, and with the coming of winter they roam to lower altitude.

What do they eat?

In the wild: wild boar, elk, lynx, badger, hare, salmon and other fish

At the Zoo: beef, rabbit, or fish often enriched with vitamins and minerals, and bone once weekly

What is their average life span?

Can live to be approximately 10-15 years in the wild, and up to 20 years in zoos.

What is their conservation status?

Listed as Endangered by the IUCN, and they are threatened by habitat loss.

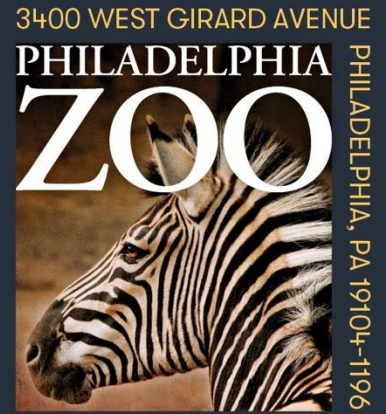


Information on Koosaka from Zoo Staff

Educator: Amur tigers, like Koosaka, are the largest cats in the world! They are extremely strong and powerful, and they can leap over 20 feet! The strong retractable claws in their paws help them to sometimes climb trees. They are used to cold weather, so they spend lots of time resting in the summer. Many people think that cats don't like water, but tigers are very strong swimmers.

Veterinarian: When Koosaka was very young, she experienced an ankle injury while playing with her sisters. This injury healed nicely, but she still has some trouble using that ankle. We noticed that she spends more time resting when it is bothering her. We also noticed that the more active she is by standing, walking, climbing, running, or jumping the better her ankle seems to be. She should be on her feet for at least 4 hours a day.

Keeper: We work with the big cats through protected contact, meaning that we never enter the same space, but can work with them between a metal mesh barrier for animal care and training. Through this work, I've to know Koosaka very well and she is a big cat with a big personality! She likes to spend time in her pool, especially if there is a big ball or other toy floating around. She likes a good nap, especially when it's hot outside. She also enjoys sharpening her claws by using the trees in her habitat, by rolling around and tearing up big logs that we provide her. Sometimes we will give her piñatas made out of newspaper and filled with fun treats, but she destroys those in seconds.



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Zookeepers are always thinking new ways to exercise the minds and bodies of the animals they care for. Doing so requires them to consider the animal's needs, behaviors, and preferences. Now it's your turn! Use the information provided to consider enrichment that would be appropriate and fun for the animal, and explain and design it.

Animal Name: _____

Species: _____

Important notes on this individual's needs, behaviors and preferences: _____

With this in mind, what would you want your designed enrichment to do for the animal? _____

Design Description: _____

Safety Note: Make sure your enrichment wouldn't allow this animal to escape, eat something bad, or get injured.

- Type of Enrichment:
- Sensory (experiencing senses, i.e. encountering new sights, sounds, smells, feels, or tastes)
 - Manipulative (handling or adjusting objects, i.e. working with a new toy)
 - Physical (moving their bodies, i.e. running or climbing)
 - Social (interacting with others, i.e. playing with people)
 - Nutritional (eating and getting vitamins i.e. trying new foods)

How often do you plan to use this enrichment? (check one)

- Daily Weekly Monthly Occasionally

How would you then test it to ensure it was useful, enjoyable, and safe for the animal? _____

