MEET THE CHEETAH

An Activity Guide for Primary Students (United States)
Lower Primary Learners (Namibia)

www.cincinnatizoo.org
www.cheetah.org
The cheetah is a very special kind of cat and is not a threat to people. Most of the cheetahs in the wild are found in Africa where they live in the savanna. They are covered with spots that help them hide in the grass. Sometimes people mistake a cheetah for a leopard. Look closely. The leopard’s spots are different from the cheetah’s pattern.

The cheetah is the fastest land animal on Earth. It can reach speeds up to 70 mph (110 kmph) in just a few seconds. That’s as fast as a race car. To be so fast, the cheetah has long legs. Being really fast helps it chase down other animals to eat. Some of the animals it eats are the gazelle and impala. A long tail helps...
the turn and keep its balance when running. Its are like .

The can give birth to up to six cubs at a time. The cubs are very small and weigh less than one pound (0.45 kg). Their begin to open after a few days. After a few weeks, the cubs begin to follow their mom. They play a lot and learn to hunt. Once they are about two years old, the cubs are living on their own.

Cheetahs are in danger of extinction. There are not very many of them left on . They need our help.

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The fastest animal on land, the cheetah can reach speeds up to 70 mph (110 kmph). Sadly, this cat is also one of the fastest disappearing animals. Less than 15,000 cheetahs remain in the wild.

**Cheetah • *Acinonyx jubatus***

- **Range:** Pockets in Africa and Iran
- **Weight:** 80-120 lbs (36-55 kg)
- **Height:** 30 in (75 cm)
- **Prey:** Small antelope, young of large antelope, warthog, hare, game birds
- **Status:** [SPECIES@RISK](#) (IUCN—Vulnerable)
Cats have to be good hunters and cheetahs are one of the best. Finish drawing the following body parts on the cheetah and color it.

**Tail**
While chasing prey, sometimes the cheetah has to turn in another direction in a split second to stay close behind the prey. The cheetah swings its tail to one side to help it keep its balance in a high speed turn.

**Spots**
Cheetahs have a tan coat of fur with black spots that helps it blend in to its habitat. This camouflage keeps them from being seen by prey they might be sneaking up on and even other predators such as lions and leopards.

**Eyes**
Cheetahs are not the only animals that hide in the grasses. The cheetah has excellent eyesight for spotting prey. They can see clearly up to 3 miles (5 km) away. We would have a tough time seeing that far even with binoculars.

**Claws**
Claws dig into the ground as the cheetah runs. This keeps the cheetah from slipping, gives it better footing and more speed.

**Long legs**
Long legs allow the cheetah to move farther and faster than it could with shorter legs.
Cheetahs belong to the cat family. Cats are predators. That is, they hunt other animals called prey. There are many cats that live in Africa. The cheetah is just one of them. Color in these African cats.

**Cheetah**
- Up to 55 in (140 cm) long and 120 lbs (55kg)
- The cheetah hunts its prey in a high-speed chase during the day.

**Caracal**
- Up to 30 in (76 cm) long and 61 lbs (28 kg)
- A small, tan cat, the caracal blends in with its desert and shrub habitat.

**Lion**
- Up to 86 in (220 cm) long and 496 lbs (225 kg)
- Lions live and hunt together in groups called prides.
Leopard
- Up to 59 in (150 cm) long and 132 lbs (60 kg)
- The leopard is strong enough to hunt large antelope and does so mostly at night.

African wild cat
- Up to 29 in (74 cm) long and 14 lbs (6.5 kg)
- About the size of a large housecat, the African wild cat lives and hunts alone for small animals in the woodlands and savannas.

Serval
- Up to 40 in (101 cm) long and 41 lbs (19 kg)
- Large ears help the serval locate small rodents by sound.

Black-footed cat
- Up to 19 in (49 cm) long and 5 lbs (2.4 kg)
- The black-footed cat is one of the smallest cats and hunts small prey such as mice, birds, spiders and insects.
Like all cats, cheetahs are carnivores, or meat-eaters. Circle the following foods that would be on the cheetah’s menu and find them in the word search. Do you know the names of these foods in any other languages?

People eat both plants and animals. Draw some of your favorite foods below.
Find the names of the cheetah’s food circled on page 8.
Test your CHEETAH I.Q.

Answer the following questions to see how much you have learned about the cheetah from the activity guide. Check your answers on the next page.

1. Why does the cheetah need to run so fast?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. What does it mean to be a carnivore?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. Why does the cheetah need our help?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. What can you do to help the cheetah?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
A Secret Message

A secret message has been left for you to decode. Go back through the pages of this book and find the hidden cheetahs. Fill in the spaces below with the letters you find written on the cheetahs. Read your secret message!

___ E ___ C ___EE___ AH’S ___F__I __ND!

Share this message with your family and friends. Cheetahs are in trouble and they need people to help them survive. The Cheetah Conservation Fund and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden are friends of the cheetah. Will you be a cheetah friend too?

Answers

Answers to Feed a Cheetah, page 8:
You should have circled the kudu, warthog, Guinea fowl, hare, duiker, steenbok, hartebeest, springbok, and oryx.

Answers to Word Search, page 9:

Answers to Test Your Cheetah I.Q., page 10:
1) Speed helps the cheetah catch its prey.
2) A carnivore is an animal that eats other animals.
3) The cheetah is in danger of extinction. There are not very many of them left.
4) Be a cheetah’s friend!

Answers to A Secret Message, page 11:
BE A CHEETAH’S FRIEND!

Glossary

Camouflage — blending in with the surroundings
Carnivore — an animal that eats mostly other animals
Extinction — no longer existing
Habitat — the place where an animal lives that provides it with food, shelter, water and space
Predator — an animal that hunts and eats mostly other animals
Prey — an animal that is hunted or eaten by other animals
Savannah — a grassland
Vulnerable — facing high risk of extinction in the wild
Overview

Teachers! This guide is designed to supplement Outreach programs led by the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden’s Cat Ambassador Program and the Cheetah Conservation Fund. Targeted for students in Primary Elementary in the United States and Lower Primary in Namibia, the guide engages students in participatory learning about cheetah conservation. The guide provides a unique and fun way to inspire a sense of wonder, gather knowledge, and sharpen skills in science, reading and language arts, visual arts and geography.

The activities in the guide relate to the following standards:

National Science Education Standards
K-4 Life Science
• Characteristics of organisms
• Organisms and their environment

Indiana Academic Standards of Science (K-2)
The Living Environment
• Diversity of life
  K.4.1, K.4.2, 2.4.1
• Interdependence of life
  1.4.3, 1.4.4, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4

The Physical Setting
• The earth and the process that shape it
  2.3.4

Ohio Science Proficiencies (4th grade test)
Earth and space science
• Identify and/or describe the relationship between human activity and the environment.

Life Science
• Demonstrate an understanding of the basic needs of living things.
• Identify ways in which organisms react to changing environments.

Kentucky Core Content Science Assessments (K-4)
The characteristics of organisms
SC-E-3.1.2, SC-E-3.1.3
Organisms and their environments
SC-E-3.3.1, SC-E-3.3.2, SC-E-3.3.3

Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (Republic of Namibia) Syllabus Learning Objectives (1-4)

Environmental Studies
Grade 1 3.4.7 My Environment – Animals
3.4.8 My Environment - Conservation
Grade 2 3.11.1 Conservation – Care and respect
Grade 3 3.10.1 Animals on land – domestic and wild
3.13.1 My Environment - Sustainable use of environment (conservation)
3.13.2 My Environment – Tourism

Natural Science and Health Education
Grade 4 1.1 The needs of living things

Credits, 2003

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