



### Introduction

Young people see animals throughout their lives, but they may not have the opportunity to think about the animal's perspective and the motivation for their actions.

Observing animals with the intention of understanding them is one way to help young people build curiosity and empathy for animals. Hopefully, students will continue to take the time to think about the emotions of people and animals in their lives, and how it motivates their actions.

### Procedure


1. Begin the activity by explaining to students that they can learn a lot about animals just by watching them, and that today they'll be observing the animals at your rescue, shelter, or sanctuary. If you do not have animals for them to observe, there are plenty of videos and live-cams of animals online, such as [this live-cam](#) from Farm Sanctuary.
  - Note: Consider teaching students about famous researchers who observed animals, such as Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Marc Bekoff. (You can show an age-appropriate video about an animal behaviorist, such as [Into the Forest with Jane Goodall](#), or you can read one of the many children's books about these individuals.)
2. Next, provide students with the Observing Animals handout.


- Have each participant choose an animal to watch and ask them to describe and draw three behaviors that they observe. (If time permits, allow them to repeat this with more animals, but one at a time.)
  - Make sure the students understand that even passive behaviors, such as sleeping or sitting peacefully, still count. (Note: If the animal is doing the same behavior, such as sleeping, for the entire time of observation, the students can note that, instead of identifying three distinct behaviors.)
3. Allow students time to watch the animals and write their observations.
  4. Ask students to share what they observed.
    - Ask questions and provide information to help students understand what they saw.
    - For example, if the student says that they saw an animal running around with another animal, ask them why they thought the animal was doing that or if they have ever done anything similar.

### Options

As an alternative, if some students observed the same animal, ask them to compare and contrast their notes in a small group before sharing what they discussed with the whole group.

# Animal Observation

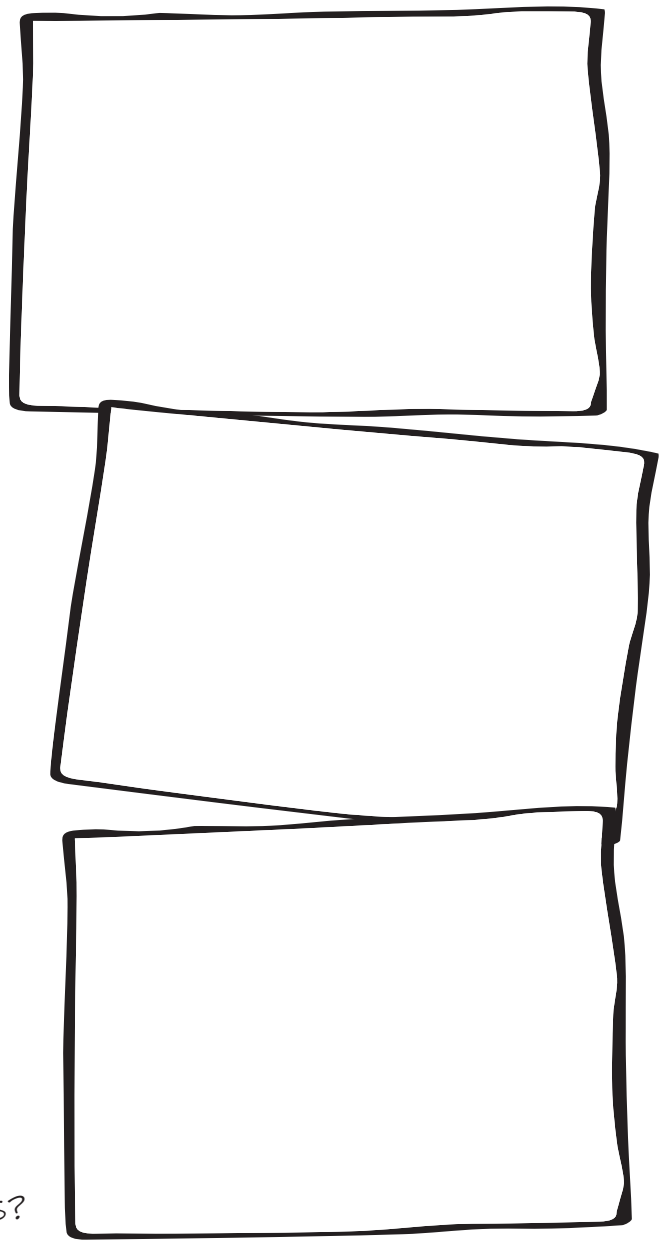
 Identify the animal you are observing: \_\_\_\_\_


 Describe and draw three behaviors that you see the animal doing:

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



 What did you learn from your observations?  
Write a short summary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_