



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mammals

Mammals are a fascinating group of animals that belong to the class Mammalia. They share common characteristics that set them apart from other creatures. From furry friends to majestic giants, mammals come in various shapes and sizes, and they play crucial roles in ecosystems around the world.

## Characteristics of Mammals

Mammals are defined by several key characteristics:

### Fur or Hair

One of the defining features of mammals is the presence of fur or hair on their bodies. This fur helps them regulate body temperature, keeping them warm or cool depending on the environment.

### Warm-Blooded

Mammals are warm-blooded, which means they can **regulate** their body temperature **internally**. This ability allows them to thrive in diverse habitats, from the icy Arctic to the scorching deserts.

### Live Birth or Milk Production

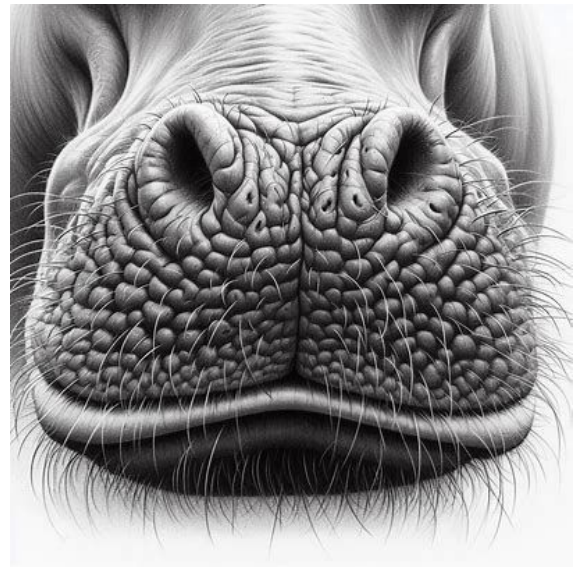
Unlike some other animals, mammals give birth to live young. Additionally, most mammals produce milk to **nourish** their offspring. This nurturing behavior is a **distinctive** trait of the class.

## Diversity of Mammals

Mammals exhibit incredible **diversity**, ranging from tiny rodents to massive whales. Here are some major groups of mammals:

### Primates

This group includes humans, monkeys, and apes. Primates are known for their advanced **cognitive** abilities and complex social structures.





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## **Carnivores**

Carnivorous mammals, such as lions, wolves, and tigers, are equipped with sharp teeth and claws for hunting prey. Their diet consists mainly of meat.

## **Herbivores**

Herbivorous mammals, like cows, giraffes, and elephants, primarily eat plants. They have specialized teeth and digestive systems adapted to processing plant matter.

## **Marine Mammals**

Whales, dolphins, and seals are examples of mammals that have adapted to life in the water. They have streamlined bodies, fins, and often breathe air through blowholes.

## **Mammals and Human Connection**

Mammals have a unique connection with humans. Some, like dogs and cats, are our loyal companions. Others, such as cows and goats, provide us with essential resources like milk and meat. Understanding the importance of mammals in our lives helps us appreciate the intricate web of life on Earth.

Mammals are a diverse and remarkable group of animals that share common characteristics while displaying incredible variations. Their adaptability and roles in ecosystems make them essential contributors to the rich tapestry of life on our planet. As we explore the world of mammals, we gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all living beings.



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## Glossary

**Cognitive:** Cognitive means related to thinking, understanding, and learning. It's how our brains work to help us learn new things and solve problems.

**Distinctive:** Distinctive describes something that stands out or is unique. It makes it special and different from other things.

**Diversity:** Diversity refers to having a variety of different things. It can be different types of plants, animals, or people, adding richness and variety to a group or environment.

**Internally:** Internally means happening inside or within something. When we talk about animals regulating their body temperature internally, it means they can control it inside their bodies.

**Nourish:** Nourish means to provide food or other substances that help living things grow and stay healthy. For example, mammal mothers nourish their young with milk.

**Regulate:** Regulate means to control or manage. When we talk about mammals regulating their body temperature, it means they can control how warm or cool they are.



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1. Highlight the headings in the passage.

Use the headings to locate the information for the following questions.

2. List the key characteristics that define mammals.

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3. How does fur or hair help mammals? \_\_\_\_\_

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Use the glossary to answer the following questions.

4. What does *diversity* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What does *nourish* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What does *cognitive* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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