



Ourselfs and Other Animals

Explorers at the Natural History Museum

Teacher's notes

Explorer activities are designed to develop the scientific skills of observing, comparing and communicating. These skills are developed through role play, with children encouraged to dress up as explorers and participate in challenges. Activities are suitable for Reception and Year One.

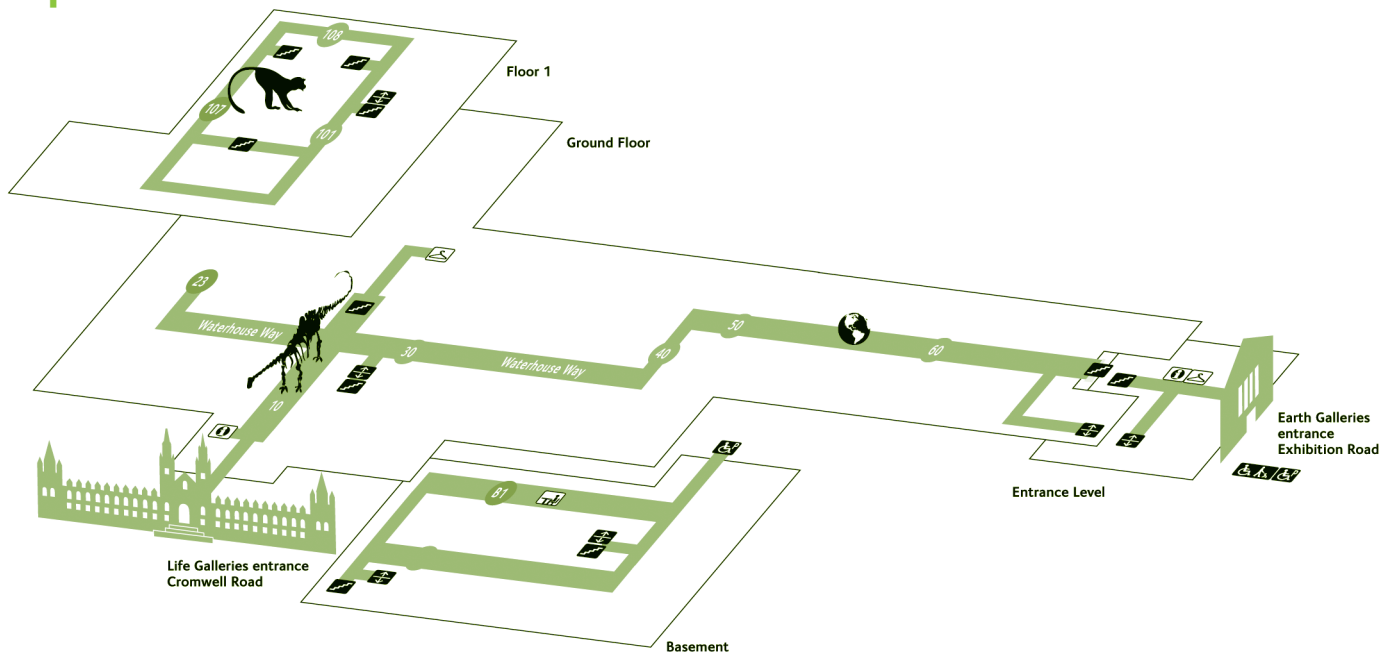
Organisation

We suggest dividing your class into small groups of five or six pupils, each with an adult leader. Each group will be given an instruction booklet. The most successful visits are those in which the class teacher has briefed the adult helpers and asked them to read through the activity instructions. It may be worthwhile reminding adults to move from the *Mammals* gallery to the *Primates* gallery half way through the activity session. As the teacher, you will be responsible for class management.

Explorer kit

Each pupil will be provided with an Explorer hat and a pair of binoculars while carrying out the activities in the Museum. Prior to your visit you will receive an Explorer Passport for each child. This includes space for pupils to draw themselves before visiting the Natural History Museum and, after their visit, to record the skills they have used and one of the animals they have seen.

Map



Key

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Cloakroom | Information desk | 40 Birds | 107 Primates |
| Picnic Area | 10 Central Hall | 50 Lasting Impressions | 108 Plant Power |
| Stairs | 23 Mammals | 60 Visions of Earth | B1 Schools Reception |
| Lift | 30 Fossil Marine Reptiles | 101 Our Place in Evolution | |

Pre-visit preparation

It helps to brief the children before their visit. Explain that the Natural History Museum is full of exciting animals and that they can be explorers at the Museum. Talk through the activities they will be doing in the galleries and discuss what it means to be an explorer. What do they think explorers do? What skills do they need? Talk through the equipment (binoculars and hat) and the passports. Why do they think an explorer might need binoculars, a hat or a passport?

Give each child an Explorer Passport. They can fill their name and picture before they visit the Museum to introduce them to the idea of becoming an explorer. Explain that they can complete the rest, including drawing their favourite Museum animal, after the visit.

You might like to teach them the look, describe, find game using objects in the school environment.

Post-visit activities

Pupils can complete their Explorer Passports, discussing and recording some of the skills they have used and the animals they have seen. The passports include space where each child can draw their favourite animal. More able children can label their drawing to show the main external body parts of their animal or write about why they like it.

Curriculum links

Explorer activities support work carried out in the classroom as outlined in the following links:

NC SC1:

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2f explore and make observations
- 2g communicate
- 2h make simple comparisons

NC SC2:

Pupils should be taught:

- 1b that animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use senses and reproduce
- 2a to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans and other animals
- 2f that humans and other animals can produce offspring and that these offspring grow into adults
- 2g about the senses that enable humans and other animals to be aware of the world around them

Early Learning Goals (Knowledge and Understanding of the World):

Find out about, and identify, some features of living things and objects they observe
Look closely at similarities and differences, patterns and change
Ask questions

QCA Ourselves themes:

- Parts of the body
- The senses
- Animals and humans
- Matching adult and baby animals
- How animals move

Activity instructions for adults

Each adult group leader will receive a colourful, laminated instruction booklet containing the following activity information:

Encourage children to get into the role of an explorer as they put on their hats and binoculars. Work with them during the activities. Help them to look closely at the animals, make comparisons, ask questions and discuss their observations, likes, dislikes and interests. Wherever possible, try to make links to their previous experiences.

Aim to encourage observation and discussion in groups.



Mammals, Gallery 23

Exploring activity

Take your group around the gallery. What animal features can you see, for example, sharp teeth, claws, scaly skin, furry skin.

Have you seen any of these animals before?

Do any of the animals remind you of animals you know?

Choose one animal to observe and discuss together:

How is your animal similar to you? For example, it has two eyes and two ears.

How is your animal different from you? For example, it has fur, it has four legs, it has a tail.

Is your animal bigger or smaller than you?

What features can you see on your animal's head? For example, ears, eyes, nose. Discuss what you think they are for, such as hearing, looking or smelling.

Game: look, describe, find

Spot the animal someone else is describing

- Find a case with lots of animals in it.
- One person chooses an animal – but keeps it secret! Describe it carefully to the others.
- Look at the animals and listen to the description – how quickly can you spot the animal being described?

Early finishers

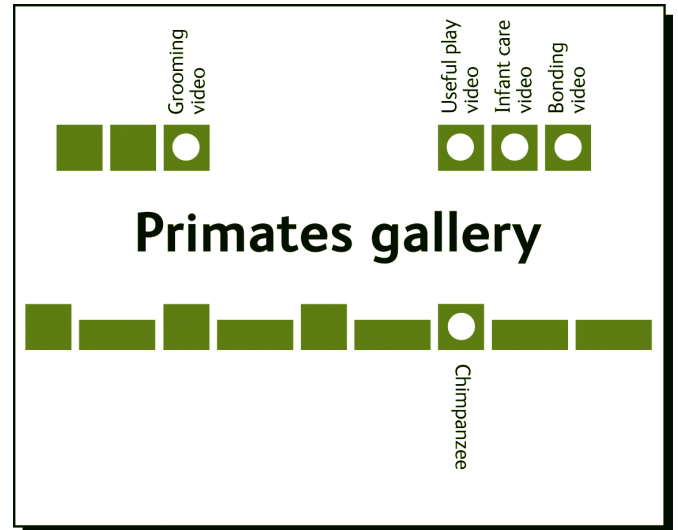
Do any of the animals have patterned fur or skin?
Are all the patterns the same?

How many feet/ toes/ claws/ wings does a particular animal have?

Choose a case of animals. Take it in turn to point to the animals in order of size, smallest to largest or largest to smallest.



Primates, Gallery 107



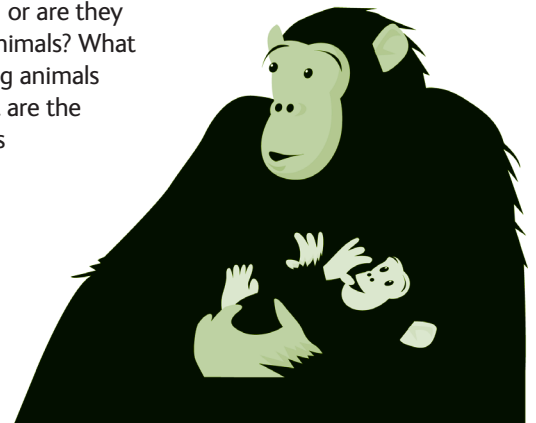
To reach the *Primates* gallery go back to the Central Hall, up the stairs directly behind the big dinosaur skeleton, and turn left.

These activities can be carried out in any order you like. Take your time over a couple of activities – you don't have to do all four!

'Primate' is another name for all the monkeys and apes in this gallery. Humans are also primates.

Babies activity

Watch the infant care video or the bonding video. Can you see any very young animals? Are they on their own or are they with other animals? What are the young animals doing? What are the adult animals doing?



Look at the two chimpanzees in the case (labelled Learning). How are they similar? How are they different? Which one do you think is the youngest? Why?

Movement activity

Watch the useful play video. What are the animals doing? Are they moving or still? How are they moving? Can you think of any words to describe how they are moving? What parts of their bodies are they using to move?

What parts of your body do you use to move?

Look at the skeletons hanging from the ceiling. These belong to gibbons. How are they positioned? What are they doing?

Copy the arm shapes with your arms to show how you think a gibbon would move. Does it have long or short arms for reaching branches?

Can you see the fingers? Are they long or short? Would this help the gibbon hold onto branches?



Hands activity

Choose an animal and look closely at one of its hands.

How does its hand compare to your own?

How many fingers are there? What colour is it? Is it furry? Does the fur cover the whole hand?

Does it have nails or claws? Is the hand bigger or smaller than your own?

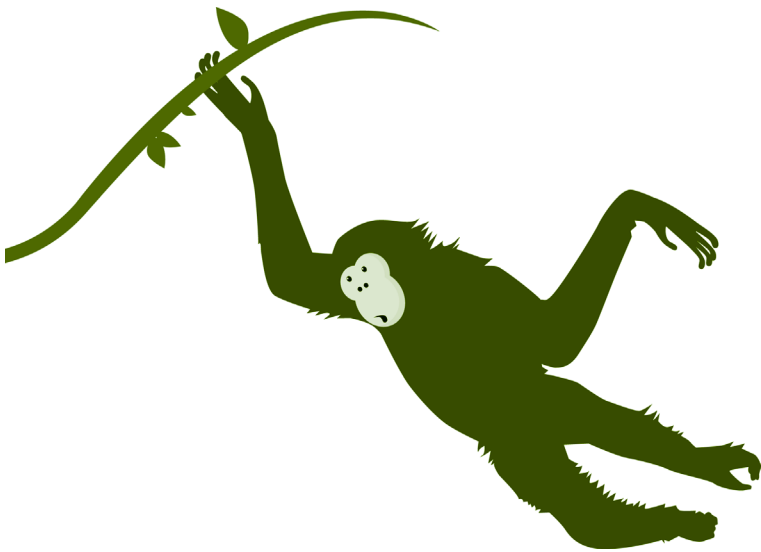
Look at a range of primate hands in the gallery.

Can you copy the hand shapes?

Which hand do you think is most similar to your own?

Look at the grooming video to see how other primates use their hands.

With the binoculars, find a place to look at people in the Central Hall (halfway down the stairs, next to the Richard Owen statue is a good viewing point). What are they using their hands for? Take it in turns to point out different things people are doing with their hands.



Faces activity

Choose any monkey or ape from the displays.

How big is the animal compared to you?

How many fingers and toes does it have? How many do you have?

Which parts of its body have hair? Which do not?

Look carefully at its face.

Look at the features – eyes, nose, mouth and ears. Describe their sizes and shapes.

How are they similar to your own?

How are they different? How does its face compare to yours?

Try copying your animal's body position and facial expression.

