

The role of a good zoo

This trail will take you round part of ZSL Whipsnade Zoo to find out about the roles of a good zoo. You will need to be very observant; looking at the animals, their enclosures and information signs. Before you starting the trail write down what you think zoos actually do in the space below.

1) In your opinion what do you think zoos do?

Pupils could note down a range of things including:

- *Keeping wild animals*
- *Conservation*
- *Protection animals/ species*
- *Entertainment*

This is just a chance to find out how pupils perceive zoos.

2) The chimps



Find your way to the chimps and walk around the enclosure. Spend some time observing the chimps and read any signs you come across. Use the information you have gathered to answer the following questions:

2a) What are the chimps doing? *The chimps could be doing a lot of different things including: sleeping, grooming each other, playing, eating, sunbathing, sitting.*

2b) What does the enclosure include to keep the chimps active and entertained?

Outside there is a climbing frame with tyres and rubber hose ropes. Inside there are boxes, straw, ropes and different levels to climb on.

2c) What does ZSL stand for?

Zoological Society of London

2d) Why are chimpanzees and other primates under threat?

They are being hunted for bushmeat which is now a big business. The increase in human population in places like Africa means that there is an increase in demand for bushmeat.

2e) How is ZSL helping to reduce the threat posed by the bushmeat trade?
ZSL is raising awareness and funds to support national park wardens, research and help orphaned chimps and gorillas.

2f) List three objectives of ZSL's Bushmeat and forest conservation programme.
These are all the answer; pupils just need to have 3

- *To help protect endangered species from extinction.*
- *To protect forest people from losing a natural source of food.*
- *To investigate species that reproduce quickly and could therefore be hunted sustainably.*
- *By supporting gorilla ecotourism projects in Gabon.*
- *Research to discover the true extent of the bushmeat trade.*
- *Law enforcement monitoring at National Parks in Democratic Republic of Congo.*
- *To develop a computer model to predict how hunting is affecting different species.*

3) Zoo vets

Find the antelope house which is near to the white rhino paddock and the reindeer enclosure. Inside the house there are posters about the life of a zoo vet for you to look at.

3a) Find out about the vast range of jobs zoo vets have to undertake and make a list in the space below.

<i>Post mortems</i>	<i>Vaccinations</i>	<i>Health checks</i>	<i>X-rays</i>
<i>Surgery</i>	<i>Sedating animals</i>		

3b) How does this list compare to what you thought a zoo vet would do?
There is no right or wrong answer it is the pupils thoughts.

4) The giraffe

Go into the Giraffe house and look at how it has been designed. What do you notice about the design of the house and why do you think the house was designed like that? (think about it from the animals, keepers and publics point of view)



<p>4a) Why is the design of the house good for the giraffe? <i>The house is very tall to accommodate the giraffes. Hay baskets are positioned high up on the wall so giraffes do not have to bend down. Concrete area - good in winter and when the ground is very wet and muddy.</i></p>
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4b) How does this design make it easier of the keepers to look after the giraffe?

Indoors there are areas in which a giraffe can be separated from the others - useful if an animal needs medical attention or needs to be kept inside for any reasons. Doors (human sized) for keepers to get into the pens to clean them out. Concrete floors for easy cleaning.

4c) Why is the design good from the general public's point of view?

Inside viewing area for the public to see the giraffes even when they are inside. A low fence in the outside paddock provides a better view while still keeping the animals enclosed.

5) The oriental short-clawed otters

Find your way to the otters and have a look round their enclosure. Other than food, what does a zoo need to provide for the otters to keep them happy? Make a list of the items that they have in their enclosure in the box below. Then number the items you have listed in order of importance. (1 - being the most important item to have in their enclosure)



*Still and running water
Den / house for hiding in*

*Logs
Plants on land and in water*

Rocks

The order of importance will be the pupils own opinion. Different opinions could be discussed later or at school as a debate in class.

6) Siberian tigers

The Siberian tiger enclosure is close to the railway station. Find your way to the enclosure and read all the information signs to help you answer the following questions.

6a) Why is it important to breed tigers in captivity?

Population numbers are declining and 3 sub species have become extinct in the last 50 years.

6b) Name a sub species of tiger that has become extinct in the last 50 years.

The Bali tiger is the one that is named on the board. (The other 2 species are the Javan tiger and the Caspian tiger.)

6c) How many tigers are thought to be in zoos around the world and how does this figure compare with the numbers of tigers in the wild?

There are approximately 300 tigers in zoos around the world more than the number thought to be left in the wild.

7) Elephant house

Find your way to the elephants and have a look round their enclosure and their house, reading all the signs as you go.

7a) What are the four different methods of enrichment?

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| 1) <i>Food and foraging</i> | 2) <i>Social enrichment</i> |
| 3) <i>Toys</i> | 4) <i>Furniture</i> |

7b) Why is enrichment important?

Enrichments helps to develop motor skills and provides stimulation for the animal. It also encourages natural behaviours including foraging. Enrichments keeps the animals happy and prevents boredom.

7c) Have a good look at the elephant enclosure and make a note of the enrichment activities that have been provided for the elephants. *Add some sketches to your notes as this will help you with the next activity.*

<i>Swimming pool</i>	<i>Canopy for shade</i>
<i>Barrels</i>	<i>Foliage hung up</i>
<i>Hay baskets</i>	<i>Logs</i>
<i>Tyres</i>	<i>Rubber hose</i>
<i>Sand and dirt</i>	<i>Trees and rope</i>

Enrichments items are changed so there may be different things in the enclosure depending on when you visit.

8) Designing enrichment

Pick an animal in the zoo and spend some time observing it and looking at the enclosure. You have to design an enrichment activity to keep the animal you have chosen active. The enrichment activity could be something that is food related or just a game to keep the animal amused. Use the space below to draw a labelled diagram of your design. Make sure you say which animal it is for and explain how the activity would be used by the animal.

Pupils must state which animal they have designed the enrichment activity for. They should make a sketch of their idea and label the design. Pupils should also explain how the enrichment activity would work and how the animal would use it.

9) Questions to contemplate

At the end of your day at the Zoo think about all the things you have seen and learnt today.

9a) Zoos have a very wide and varied role to play. From what you have seen and heard today, put the role in order of importance (**there is no right or wrong answer to this it is the pupils own opinion**)

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| Conserving species in the wild | Conserving species in captivity |
| Education | Keeping the animals happy |
| Keeping the public happy | Entertainment |
| | Research |

9b) If someone asked you what the role of a zoo is what would you say? (in a couple of sentences)

Answers should include information the pupils have found out about ZSL Whipsnade Zoo and the work ZSL does both in the Zoo and in the wild. They should talk about captive breeding and conservation in other countries. They can use examples to illustrate their answer.

9c) In the space below explain why animals are threatened in the wild and how zoos are helping to conserve endangered species. (Try and write about species in general but include an example.)

Pupils should use their own knowledge and information they gained during the visit to answer this question. They should include:

- *reasons behind species decline (e.g. habitat loss, habitat degradation, hunting, pet trade, diseases, trade in animal parts for medicines, trade in bushmeat)*
- *that zoos and other organisations are helping through captive breeding programmes. (This enables us to make sure that the species does not become extinct because there will always be individuals in captivity.)*
- *Raising awareness and funds for projects.*