

Animal Adjectives

You may have heard of a serpentine river that meanders like a snake, or an elephantine item that's big as an elephant, but there are many other adjectives based on animals. Students will expand their vocabularies by applying strategies to identify words then use them in sentences.

Curriculum Connection

Alberta Education Program of Studies: English Language Arts (2000)

3.1 Plan and Focus

- decide on and select the information needed to support a point of view.

3.2 Select and Process

- locate information to answer research questions using a variety of sources.

3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate

- make notes on a topic, combining information from more than one source

4.3 Present and Share

- demonstrate control of voice, pacing, gestures and facial expressions; arrange props and presentation space to enhance communication
- respond to the emotional aspects of presentations by providing nonverbal encouragement and appreciative comments

Alberta Education Program of Studies: Information and Communication Technology (2000-2003)

C.7 Students will use electronic research techniques to construct personal knowledge and meaning.

- 2.1 Use a variety of technologies to organize and synthesize researched information
- 2.2 Use selected presentation tools to demonstrate connections among various pieces of information

Objectives

Students will:

- expand their vocabulary by applying strategies to identify words.
- apply newly-learned words by using them in a sentence.

Materials

- Worksheets
- Dictionary or thesaurus
- Taxonomy chart or reference (optional)

Activities

1 Brainstorming Similes

Ask the class which animals they would use to describe various characteristics of nouns—size, movement, intellect, character, etc. They might typically come up with phrases like “small as a bug,” “wise as an owl” or “fast as a cheetah.” Your students will likely generate an extensive list. Record these for use in the following activities.

2 Exploring descriptions using animals

After generating a list of similes, challenge the class to use the animal name as a descriptor. For example, rather than saying “as loyal as a dog” use “dog-like loyalty.” Instead of “stealthy as a cat” use “cat-like stealth.” Ask the students to compare the first phrases to the second—which do they think sounds better? Which would fit best into a story?



Animal Adjectives (continued)

3 Animal Adjectives

Next explain that while these compound words are valid, it might add more interest to their story to use a different form of the animal names as adjectives. These draw on the common, scientific and foreign language forms of animal names. Note that many adjectives for animals end in *'ine'*, meaning *'related to'* or *'referring to'*.

The animal name may not be immediately obvious, but with a bit of guesswork, research and luck they should be able to find out.

The two worksheets attached can be used for either independent or group work. The students first guess the animal referred to by the adjective, then confirm their guess. Finally, they use the word in a sentence.

Enrichment

Ask students to compare their final sentences to their first efforts at comparing things to animals. Which sound more interesting? Challenge them to find more such words, and to use them in future writing.

Solutions

Worksheet 1

1. feline cat
2. leonine lion
3. piscine fish
4. lupine wolf
5. porcine pig
6. asinine donkey, ass
7. ursine bear
8. caballine horse

Worksheet 2

1. vituline calf, veal
2. corvine deer
3. lumbricine earthworm
4. procyonine raccoon
5. leporine rabbit
6. phocine seal
7. sciurine squirrel
8. murine mouse or rat

Animal Adjectives

Activity Sheet 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

You may have heard of a *serpentine* river that meanders like a snake, or an *elephantine* item that's big as an elephant, but there are many more adjectives based on animals.

See if you can guess the animal referred to by each of the following adjectives. Then look each one up in a dictionary or thesaurus. Finally, write a sentence using each word below.

1. **feline** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

2. **leonine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

3. **piscine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

4. **lupine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

5. **porcine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

6. **asinine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

7. **ursine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

8. **caballine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

Animal Adjectives

Activity Sheet 2

Name: _____

Date: _____

You may have heard of a *serpentine* river that meanders like a snake, or an *elephantine* item that's big as an elephant, but there are many more adjectives based on animals.

See if you can guess the animal referred to by each of the following adjectives. Then look each one up in a dictionary or thesaurus. Finally, write a sentence using each word below.

1. **vituline** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

2. **corvine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

3. **lumbricine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

4. **procyonine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

5. **leporine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

6. **phocine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

7. **sciurine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence:

8. **murine** *guess:* _____ *actual:* _____

sentence: