

# Animal Descriptions

*By using adjectives and simile, students will describe and then draw images of animals while gaining an appreciation for how description evokes imagery.*

## Curriculum Connection

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

#### **4.1 Enhance and Improve**

- Use an increasing variety of words to express and extend understanding of concepts related to personal interests and topics of study (grade 4)
- Extend word choice through knowledge of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms and the use of a thesaurus. (grade 5)
- Choose words that capture a particular aspect of meaning and that are appropriate for context, audience and purpose. (grade 6)

#### **2.2 Respond to Texts**

##### **Appreciate the artistry of texts**

- Explain how simile and hyperbole are used to create mood and mental images (grade 5)

#### **1.1 Discover and Explore**

##### **Set goals**

- Use appropriate terminology to discuss developing abilities in personal language learning and use. (grade 7)

## Objectives

Students will:

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

## Materials

- Paper
- Dictionaries/thesaurus
- Art supplies (paper, pencil crayons, etc)

## Activity

### **Describing Animals**

Each student writes out the physical description of an animal as accurately and detailed as possible, without naming the animal. It can be any animal they choose, in any kind of environment – e.g., a service dog at work, pet cat lying in a sunny spot, hippo in a zoo, or horse in a field. As part of their research prior to writing, they should find a picture of the animal to work from so they can include all the details.

Alternatively, if given as a homework assignment, they could have one of their own animals “model” for them.

After all students have written their descriptions, have them switch papers. Each student now reads the paragraph and draws the animal described.

## Animal Descriptions (continued)

Then, on the back of the drawing, students write their answers to these two questions:

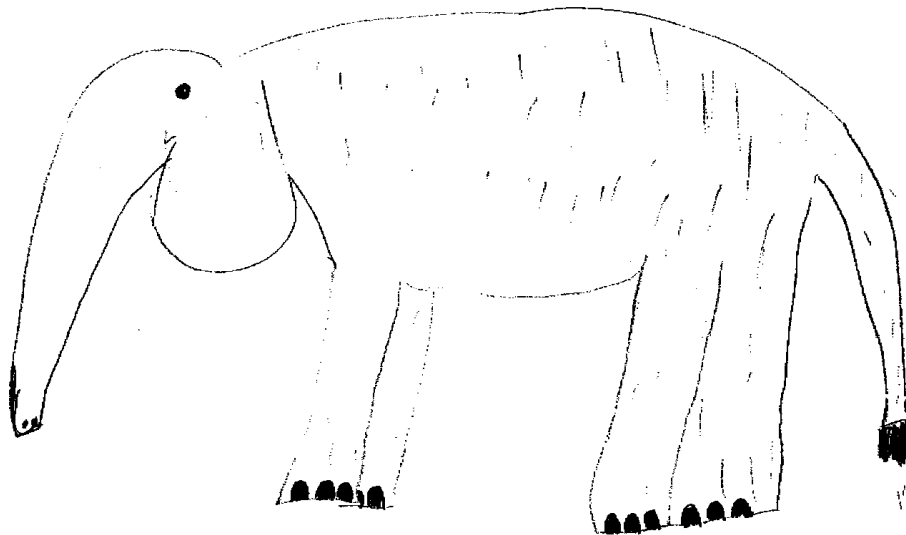
1. Which part of the description was most helpful in identifying the animal?
2. What could have been added to make it easier to draw the animal?

Students then take turns reading the paragraph

aloud and let the rest of the class determine if the drawing matches the description. Next, have them examine their drawings to see if they included anything that was NOT described in the paragraph. Discuss the fact that people often refer to their own experiences and add to the description without even realizing it.

### Example (paragraph written by a student)

The largest creature I have ever seen was an immense, grey animal with bristly hair. The hair was wide-spaced so you could see its mottled grey skin. Its tail was flat and was also covered in this bristly hair with a black tuft at the end. Its huge, flat ears were shaped kind of like Africa and often flapped side to side to keep this massive animal cool. A small, black eye was located on either side of its somewhat rounded face. A long, hose-like nose reached down to four round white toe-nailed feet. Two curved, lance-sized tusks protruded on either side of its trunk. It took four thick legs to support this house-sized mammoth!



Thanks to Judi Snowdon of Crowsnest Consolidated High School in Coleman for this lesson. If you have lessons or activities that you are willing to share, please send them to [animalwise@albertaspc.org](mailto:animalwise@albertaspc.org).