



# Animals like to play too!

By the end of the lesson the learners will be able to:

- Name some of the games that some animals like to play.
- Articulate why they think animals might like to play.

## Materials and preparation

- *Animals like to play! Images of animals playing A3* for the main activity.
- An extra set of two pictures for more questions, printed on A3 sized paper.
- Board and chalk to write questions down.
- *Playful animals worksheet*.
- Refer to the *information for the teacher* at the end of this lesson plan to prepare for the lesson.

## Key words

### **Bonobo**

A type of chimpanzee found in the rainforests of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is believed to be the closest living relative of humans.

### **skills**

The ability to do something well.

*Lions need to develop their hunting skills from a young age.*

## Starter

*Board race*  
5 mins

or  
*Think, pair, share*  
15 mins

### **1. Board race.**

Organise the class into two teams of five to ten children and ask them to line up facing the board.

The teams get two minutes to write a list of as many animals they can think of as possible. Each person writes one animal on the board and passes the chalk to the next person. The team with the most animals at the end of the two minutes wins.

Ask the class if they enjoyed the game, and why they like to play in general.

## 2. Think, pair, share.

Write the following questions on the board:

- What are some of your favourite games?
- Why do you like playing them?
- Why do you think playing is important?
- Do you think animals also like to play?
- Have you seen any animal play before?

Ask learners to think about the answers for two minutes independently before sharing their thoughts with a partner for five minutes. Then choose some pairs to report their conversations back to the whole group.

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## Main activity

*Picture discussion*  
15 min

*Worksheet*  
15 mins

1. Show learners the series of A3 pictures featuring animals playing and ask them to spot the different types of games they are playing. You can provide the following key words on the board for help:  
*teasing    play fighting    using toys    sliding    chasing*
2. Ask learners to react on what they have just seen: how do they think the animals are feeling in the pictures?
3. Show learners the extra set of two pictures and read the questions written below the pictures.
4. Ask learners to complete their worksheet: *Playful animals*.

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## Plenary

*Feedback*  
10 mins

Go over learners' answers to the worksheet questions, then ask the group if anything that they learnt this lesson surprised them.

## Information for the teacher

### Reasons animals play

Usually it is the young animals that play as they get what they need from their parents and don't have any responsibilities such as hunting or keeping watch for predators.

In the past, scientists considered that young animals played just to practise skills needed for adult life: hunting, fighting and mating. However today, scientists recognise that the benefits of play are far less simple and more for immediate gain. Animals play for the following reasons:

- For physical exercise.
- To strengthen social roles and communication within a group.
- For fun: for psychological and physical well-being.
- To prepare young animals to take risks and be able to deal with unexpected situations.

Scientists organise play into three distinct categories:

1. Object play: with a ball, a stick or anything animals can find.
2. Loco-motor play: running and jumping, usually alone.
3. Social play: play fighting, chasing, teasing.

Please note: sad or stressed animals don't play! Without the stimulus of mental challenges, animals get bored or depressed, which is what happens when animals are kept in small enclosures, or are unable to interact with other animals.