

# Pandas

Pandas are the national animal of China. They are related to bears and have black eye patches.

## What do pandas look like?

There are two different types of panda. The giant panda is the most well known but the red panda also lives in the mountains in China. The red panda has a long tail and is the same size as a cat. The giant panda is much bigger and has black and white fur. Both the red and giant pandas have long, sharp claws that they use to climb trees and strip bamboo.



## What do pandas eat?

Pandas are very fussy eaters. Most pandas only eat bamboo, a type of grass. A giant panda will eat half their own weight in bamboo every day.



A giant panda eating bamboo.

## What do pandas do?

Pandas spend most of their time eating or sleeping. Young pandas like to play with each other and can be very naughty

## Did you know?

Pandas are endangered and if they are not looked after could become extinct.

# Elephants

Elephants live in Africa and India and are the largest animals that live on land.

## What do elephants look like?

Elephants have tough grey skin and large ears. They have a long nose called a trunk that they use to drink water. African elephants have bigger ears than Indian elephants. Elephants have tusks to protect them from other animals.

## What do elephants eat?

Elephants are herbivores and eat bark and leaves from trees.

## What do elephants do?

Elephants are usually very gentle but can get quite cross. Elephants are very clever and know how to find water even when it is far away. When they find water they like to swim.



A bull elephant

## Did you know?

A mother elephant is called a cow. The dad is a bull and a baby is called a calf!

# Tigers

Tigers are a type of big cat that live in India and are very dangerous.

## What do tigers look like?

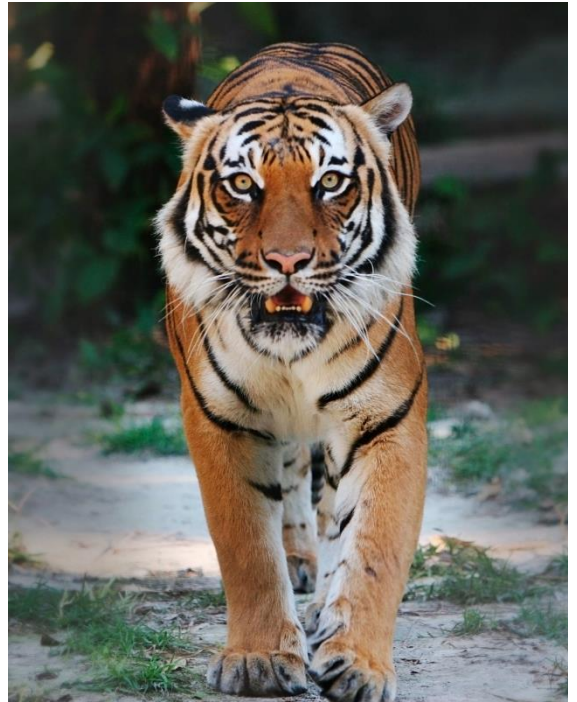
Tigers have orange fur with black stripes so they can hide in tall grass.

## What do tigers eat?

Tigers are carnivores. They hunt for their food.

## What do tigers do?

Tigers live on their own. They like to hunt and are the only big cat who likes to swim.



A male tiger

## Did you know?

Tigers are an endangered species. That means there are not many left in the wild.

## Looking after a pet gerbil.

There are many species of gerbil. The Mongolian gerbil is most often kept as a pet.



## How to care for a gerbil.

Gerbils should never be kept alone and are happiest in small groups. You should handle a gerbil carefully to avoid any stress to the gerbil. Gerbils should be picked up by gently cupping them with two hands, and fully supporting their body. It is important to interact with your gerbils every day. You should never leave your gerbils unsupervised with another animal who may harm or frighten them. Finally, when caring for your gerbil it is most important that you should never pick up a gerbil by the tail, as this can really harm them.

## A suitable home for a gerbil.

Provide your gerbils with a gerbilarium large enough to provide shelter, opportunities to dig and space to exercise. You should also provide adequate bedding and nesting material, because gerbils naturally like to build nests, so bedding material should be deep enough to allow your gerbils to dig and build their own nest. Provide your gerbil with a comfortable, dry, clean place to live, and keep your gerbils in a quiet place where they can rest undisturbed.

Gerbils like to have cardboard, paper, hay, empty toilet rolls, and egg containers to chew on. They also need a rough-surfaced object such as a stone to help wear down claws.

Don't use a cage with metal bars as this can be dangerous for gerbils, also sawdust should not be used as it may cause breathing problems.

## What a gerbil eats.

Gerbils must always have access to clean fresh water. You should feed your gerbils various grasses and a range of leaves and herbs. To keep a gerbil's diet varied feed them fruit (pear, melon, apple, oranges) and vegetables (cucumber, carrot, and pumpkin). Do not give your gerbil grapes or rhubarb as these are poisonous to them. Gerbils love to hoard food in large stores; in the wild, gerbils may hoard up to 1.5kg of grain in one store! So don't be surprised to find food around the cage.

Gerbils require care and attention, a specific diet and home. If you follow this advice for caring for a pet gerbil, it will be happy and healthy.



# Fossils

Fossils are preserved remains of animals and plants that lived millions of years ago made in sedimentary rock. Usually when something dies it is eaten or decays and therefore disappears. However, when an animal or plant dies it can get covered over with mud or sand, it can stay there and over a long time, become a fossil.

## Dinosaurs

Fossils are essential to understanding about life a long time ago. Without them we would not even know that dinosaurs existed! People who study fossils are called palaeontologists and these are the people who have found out what we now know about dinosaurs. However, this only started 200 years ago, so we've only known about dinosaurs for 200 years!



### Did you know?

- 'Sue' is the nickname given to most complete and best preserved Tyrannosaurus Rex specimen ever found.
- The word 'fossil' comes from an old word 'fossilis', meaning 'dug up'.
- Fossils are only found in sedimentary rock.
- The fossils in the pictures are called ammonites. It is the town symbol for Whitby in North Yorkshire. Whitby is good for fossil hunting and long ago, people thought that the ammonites were snakes turned to stone by St. Hilda!

## How a Fossil is Made

When a plant or animal dies, their body sinks into mud or is buried by sand. This usually happens on the sea bed. Being buried preserves it from rotting or being eaten by other animals. Whilst it is underground, water and minerals seep into the bones and where the bones and body used to be and make a hard shape. This is squashed under more layers of sand, mud and eventually rock over many, many millions of years. Much later, palaeontologists or fossil hunters may find it as the rock in which it is encased becomes unearthed.