

Wildlife Detectives

Case File: Giraffe



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Wildlife Detectives

Case File: Giraffe

Animal Under Investigation: Giraffa camelopardalis

Alias: "The Leaf Licker"

Location: African savannas

Height: Up to 18 feet

Distinguishing Features: Extra-long neck, purplish-black tongue, suspiciously stylish spots

Fact File: Tongue Out, Neck Up!

Giraffes are the tallest land animals on Earth — even a baby giraffe can be taller than your teacher! These lanky, leaf-loving mammals live on the African savanna, where they browse the treetops for snacks that most animals can only dream of.

Let's talk tongues. A giraffe's tongue isn't just long — it's prehensile, which means it can grab things like a monkey's tail. How long, you ask? About 18 to 20 inches! And that dark purple-black color? It helps keep the tongue from getting sunburned while giraffes spend hours slurping leaves in the hot African sun.

Their favorite food? Leaves — especially from acacia or mulberry trees. Giraffes are built to browse, not graze, which means they munch on leaves and twigs from trees instead of grass. It pays to be tall!

And speaking of tall — their circulatory system is pretty impressive, too. With hearts that can weigh up to 25 pounds, giraffes need strong pumps and special valves in their necks to keep blood flowing all the way to their brains. Without it, they'd be getting dizzy just bending over for a sip of water.



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Case File: Giraffe

Giraffes don't just walk — they pace. That means both legs on the same side move together (right-right, left-left). It might look a little strange, but it helps them stay steady while cruising across the savanna in slow-motion style.

Their camouflage coats may look like fashion statements, but those patchy spots help them disappear into the dappled light of trees and tall grasses. (Although let's be honest — giraffes would win best-dressed at any safari party.)

Investigate This!

Write your answers using your sharp Wildlife Detective skills:

- Where do giraffes live?
- What is special about a giraffe's tongue?
- What does it mean when an animal "browses"?
- How do giraffe spots help them in the wild?
- What is pacing, and why do giraffes do it?



Wildlife Detectives

Case File: Giraffe

Keep the Case Open: Dig Deeper!

You've uncovered the giraffe's tongue secrets, solved puzzles, and cracked codes — but the best Wildlife Detectives always keep asking questions.

Want to keep the case open and learn even more about these long-necked wonders?

Your Next Mission:

Explore the wild world of giraffes online. These giraffe-friendly websites are packed with real photos, cool facts, and up-to-date info from animal experts.

Giraffe Resources for Kids:

- San Diego Zoo Kids

A kid-safe site with videos, fast facts, and fun giraffe trivia.

<https://sdzwildlifeexplorers.org/animals/giraffe>

- National Geographic Kids - Giraffe Facts

Bright, interactive, and perfect for curious minds.

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/giraffe>



Wildlife Detectives

Code Cracker Challenge:

Vocabulary Unscramble

Wildlife Detectives, your next mission is a tricky one! We've found a list of scrambled words in the giraffe case file — and they're all key vocabulary words you've learned during your investigation. Use your sharp eyes and brainpower to unscramble each word.

1. RLCTAIRCUOY

2. VSNA AAN

3. AMCLGFOUAE

4. HLSE EENRIP

5. SWEBOR

6. NIGCAP

Vocabulary Match

Read each definition below and write the correct giraffe vocabulary word on the line. All the words come from your Giraffe Fact File!

a. Able to grab or hold things.

b. Colors or patterns that help animals hide.

c. How blood moves through the body

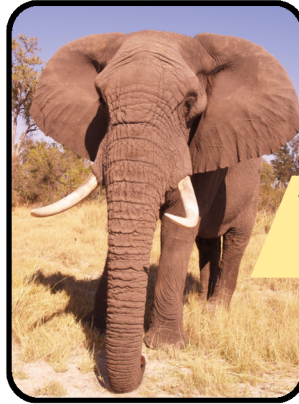
d. To eat leaves or twigs from trees.

e. A way of walking where both legs on the same side move together

f. A grassy place with scattered trees.

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Spot the Difference



African Elephant

VS



Giraffe

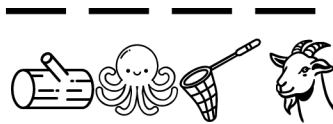
Q How many differences can you spot between the elephant and giraffe?

Q Which one would you rather be and why?

Wildlife Detectives Cryptogram



Use the key to crack the code and reveal the hidden fact about this awesome animal!



Each letter has been swapped using a secret pattern. Use the cipher below to figure out what the message says.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z



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Answer Key

Vocabulary Unscramble

1. RLCTAIRCUOY = CIRCULATORY
2. VSNAAN = SAVANNA
3. AMCLGFOUAE = CAMOUFLAGE
4. HLSEENRIP = PREHENSILE
5. SWEBOR = BROWSE
6. NIGCAP = PACING

Vocabulary Match

- a. Able to grab or hold things. - Prehensile
- b. Colors or patterns that help animals hide. - Camouflage
- c. How blood moves through the body - Circulatory
- d. To eat leaves or twigs from trees. - Browse
- e. A way of walking where both legs on the same side move together. - Pacing
- f. A grassy place with scattered trees - Savanna

Cryptogram

MY TONGUE IS ALMOST TWO FEET LONG