

Primate, Cat, & Aquatics Scavenger Hunt: Grades 7-8

1. The slow loris is a highly trafficked animal. They are taken from the wild to be sold as pets. However, the slow loris is not suited to life in a small cage and many die at a young age. Harsh lighting can damage their eyes, their sensitive feet are wounded by metal cages and excessive handling, and the stress of being caged can kill them. How can individuals like you address the illegal pet trade?
2. There are many types of primates that come in all shapes and sizes. Apes are large, do not have tails, and have large brains. Monkeys are generally smaller, usually have tails, and have smaller brains. Prosimians have more primitive characteristics: they are small, usually have larger eyes, and are sometimes nocturnal. Can you sort the following species into the right classifications: ape, monkey, or prosimian? Gorilla, black howler, ring-tailed lemur, aye-aye, white-faced saki, slow loris, and red titi. (Hint: there are three prosimians.)
3. Gorillas and other apes exhibit high levels of intelligence. Scientist and biologists study apes in the wild and in captivity to learn more about their cognitive skills. How do you think we can study ape intelligence? What ape behavior or actions indicate intelligence?
4. Like many animals, mandrills are sexually dimorphic, which means that males and female look noticeably different. Observe the mandrill. Identify the differences in appearance between the males and females. Which ones are the males? Why might the males look so different from the females?
5. Many animals found on the island of Madagascar are found nowhere else on earth. The fossa is one of these animals and is also the largest predator on the island. Looking at the other animals in the PCA building, which animals do you think are common prey of fossas in the wild?
6. Head over to the aquatics area and find our tropical fish tanks containing the clownfish. These fish are also known as anemonefish because in the wild they live inside anemones, or stinging sea animals similar to jellyfish. Clownfish and anemones have a *symbiotic* relationship; the fish and the anemone help each other. What benefits might the clownfish get from living in an anemone? What benefits might the anemone get?
7. Now find the octopus. Animals have many different kinds of defense mechanisms to protect themselves from being killed by predators. Some species of octopus can shed an arm if they are being pursued by a predator. Don't worry, though, their arms grow back. How might shedding an arm protect an octopus from being eaten by a predator?
8. Some fish are solitary and live alone, while others are considered "schooling" fish and live in very large groups and swim very close together. What is the advantage of living in a large, tight group?
9. Classifying animals can be a hard task. Red pandas and giant pandas have been reclassified many times. Although they share similarities in diet, habitat, and some body features, it has been concluded that they are only distantly related. Giant pandas are bears, while red pandas are an animal all their own; the only "true panda". Observe the red pandas. What other animals do they remind you of?
10. Head outside and observe the cheetahs. Cheetahs are some of the fastest animals on the planet. At top speed, they can run 60mph. That's as fast as a car on the freeway! Study the cheetah's body. How is it designed for speed?