

# Animal Behavior Ethogram

## Activity Overview

Carefully observing animals is an inquiry-based activity that can be done anywhere, from the local zoo to the schoolyard. This activity asks students to select an animal of their choice and record its behavior over a set period of time. Scientists use ethograms to help them regularly collect this data.

## Materials

- Copies for each student
- Stopwatch or timer
- Pencils and coloring tools
- Animals to view—either live or through video



## Instructions

1. Explain to students that they will be animal behavior scientists in this activity.
2. Find a space to view animals or choose a video of animals. Ask students to choose an animal to observe. More than one student can observe the same animal.
3. Provide individual students with a copy of the data sheets. The first page asks students to identify the weather for the day and also includes the “Animal Behavior Bank.” This bank explains the possible behaviors students will see and matching icons for each behavior.
4. The students’ data sheet shows six (6) total observation rows. You, or another instructor, will serve as the time keeper. Choose a determined amount of time and observation interval. **Recommended:** Three (3) minutes of observation with every 30 seconds counting as one (1) observation.
5. Announce every observation interval so students can record what they see on their data sheet.
6. After observation, the provided extension questions can be used for further exploration. Students may want to create graphs or tables to display their data.

# Ethogram: Observation Data Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Today's weather is:  
(circle or color your choices)



Sunny



Cloudy



Rainy



Windy



Snowy

## Animal Behavior Bank

**Grooming**

Animal is cleaning itself.



**Feeding**

Animal is eating or looking for food.



**Moving**

Animal is moving around its home.



**Resting**

Animal is lying down or staying still.



**Vocalizing**

Animal is making noise.



**Not Visible**

You cannot see the animal.







































# Ethogram: Observation Data Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Choose one (1) animal to watch. Your teacher will keep track of time and let you know when to mark your paper.

Describe your animal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Observation	What is your animal doing?					
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

# Ethogram: Extension Questions

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Think about your animal and answer these questions.

**1.) What was your animal doing most of the time?**

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**2.) What items did you see in the animal's habitat?**

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**3.) Did your animal use any of these items? Which ones?**

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**4.) What else would you like to learn about studying animals?**

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# Ethogram: Extension Questions

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Draw your animal in its habitat.

