

# GIRAFFES



## DID YOU KNOW?

Male giraffes are called **bulls**. Female giraffes are called **cows**.

**D**o you think basketball players are tall? If a basketball player stood next to a giraffe, which one would be taller? The giraffe, of course!

Giraffes are taller than any other land animal in the world. How tall? Male giraffes can grow between 15 and 19 feet tall. Females can grow between 13 and 16 feet tall. What about their offspring? You might think they are short. If you think 6 feet tall is short!

A baby giraffe is called a *calf*. It lives inside its mother for 13–15 months. The mother goes to a special place when she is ready to have her calf.

The special place is full of other mothers. A newborn calf can get up on its feet within twenty minutes. When it does, it starts to nurse. That means it gets milk from its

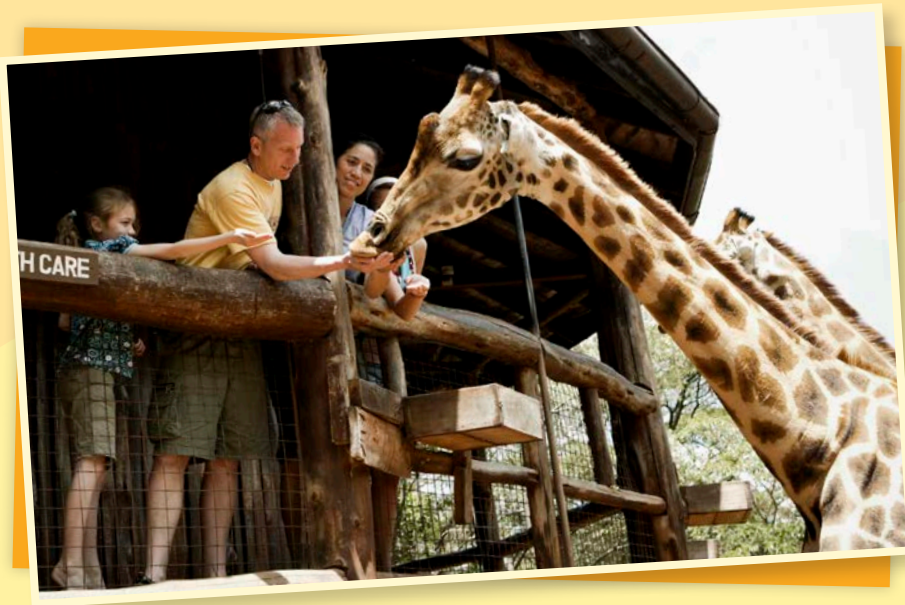
mother. The milk has all the nutrients that the calf needs. The calf can walk after about an hour. It can run within twenty-four hours. A calf can grow a little over an inch in its first week. It will double its height before its first birthday. A calf can measure up to 10 feet tall in just one year!

Calves nurse for about a year and then stop. But they nibble on grass and

other plants within a few weeks after birth. They are independent by fifteen months. They are not fully-grown, though. Female calves are fully grown by age five. It takes a little longer for male calves. They are fully grown by age seven.

Lions and hyenas are a giraffe's predators. So calves are never left on their own. Newly-born and very young calves are at the greatest risk.

All the mother giraffes watch over all the calves. The mothers protect them and keep them safe. Grown giraffes have large hooves. They use their hooves to protect themselves. And they do their best to protect their babies. After all, that's what mothers do!



This family feeds a giraffe during a trip to Kenya, Africa.





# BLUE WHALES



**T**he blue whale is the biggest animal to ever live on Earth. The biggest female ever measured weighed 200 tons. That is about how much 15 school buses weigh. The whale was 97 feet long. That is longer than a basketball court. How big is a blue whale baby?

“Big!” is the answer. A mother whale gives birth to one baby at a time. The baby is called a calf. A newborn calf weighs between 6,000 and 8,000 pounds. That is as much as three or four elephants weigh! It can be up to 25 feet long. That is about how long two cars are if you line them up.

A calf nurses, or drinks, its mother’s milk. The milk is very rich. It is full of nutrients. A calf will gain about 200 pounds a day. It gains that much every day for a year! It will nurse for up to

12 months. The calf will be about 50 feet long when it stops nursing.

Although whales live in the water, they breathe air. The air comes in through the blowholes at the top of their heads. A newborn calf depends on its mother to help it breathe. The mother pushes the calf up to the surface. The calf breathes out, then takes another breath. Blue whales can stay underwater for about 15 to 20 minutes. Then they need to breathe again.

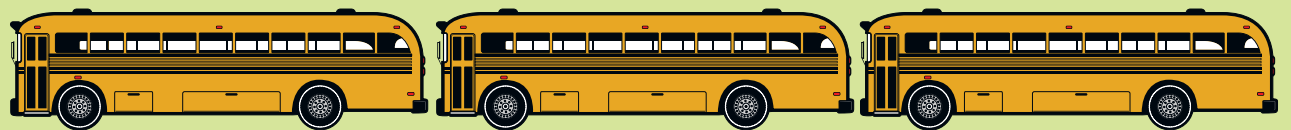
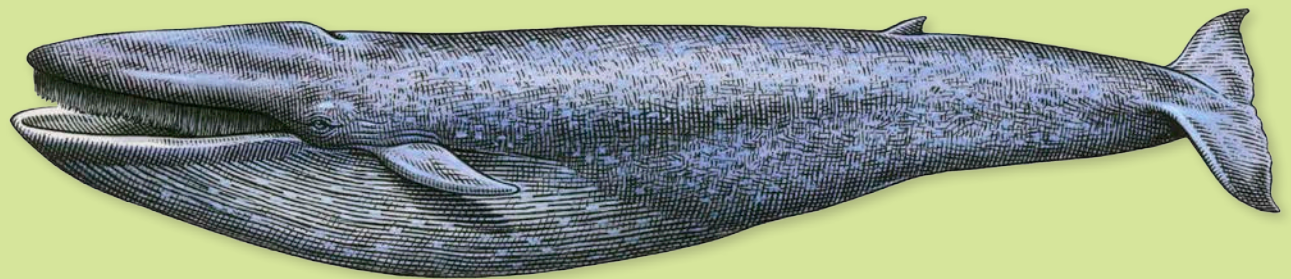
Blue whales are one of the species of mammals that migrate. They may travel 3,000 miles to find food, but mother whales and their calves do not go as far.

Scientists have a theory. They think it is because the calves cannot bear the cold water as much as their mothers can.

DID YOU KNOW?

A blue whale's **tongue** alone can weigh as much as one elephant!

A blue whale has no predators other than humans. Humans hunted many kinds of whales to near extinction. So what is the biggest danger a mother whale must protect her calf from? A large ocean liner filled with people.





# KANGAROOS



You might already know that kangaroos get around by hopping. You might have heard that opossums hang from their tails (they do not, by the way). You might also know that koalas are not really bears. It might not seem that these mammals have a lot in common. There is one way in which they are. They are all members of the same family of mammals. They are called *marsupials*. What is a marsupial? It is an animal that carries its young in a pouch.

As with all mammals, the females give birth to the babies. This is why only female kangaroos have a pouch. A female has one litter a year. There is only one baby in each litter. The baby is called a *joey*. When a joey is born, it is only 1 inch long. Look at a ruler to

see how big 1 inch really is. The joey is very small compared to its mother. Female kangaroos can grow to be 6 feet tall.

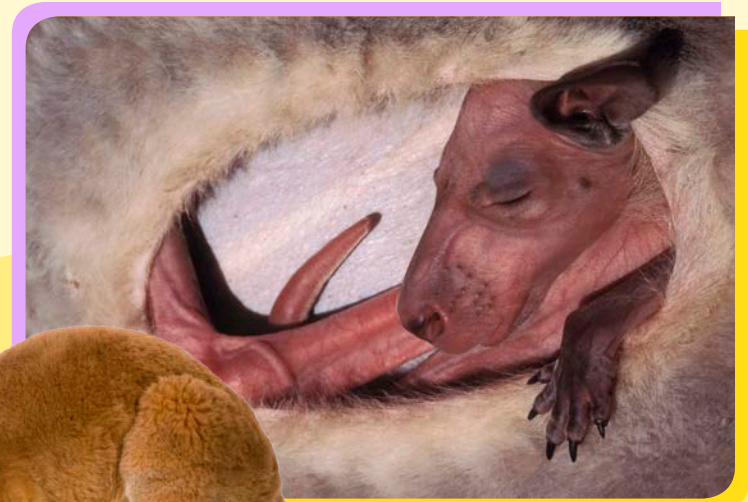
**DID YOU KNOW?**

A kangaroo's back **feet** are very strong. They can kill a predator with a single kick.

A joey has no fur. It is not even fully developed. What it does have, though, are special nails. The joey uses these nails to move up the mother's body. When it reaches the pouch, it crawls inside. Then the joey attaches itself to its mother to nurse. It drinks milk from her body. The mother's milk helps the joey develop and grow. Her soft, warm, furry pouch also keeps the joey safe.

When the joey is about four months old, it comes out of the pouch for short periods of time. The joey learns

to hop. It learns to search for food. But it always goes back into the pouch to sleep and feel safe. As the joey gets older, it stays out of the pouch for longer and longer periods of time. When the joey gets to be seven to ten months old, it finally leaves its mother's pouch for good.



A 130-day-old baby joey napping in his mom's pouch.





# SQUIRRELS



## DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than 200 **species** of squirrels around the world. Australia is the only continent where squirrels do not live.

Which animal has its babies in a nest, but is not a bird? The answer is a mother squirrel.

You can look outside on any given day and see squirrels. You do not normally see baby gray squirrels, do you? That is because a squirrel is prey to many animals. So squirrel babies stay in a nest or in a tree hole until they are about six to eight weeks old.

A squirrel's home protects not only the babies, but the whole family. If the litter is born in the fall, the family often lives in a hole in a tree. If they are born in the spring, they live in nests. Nests made by squirrels are called *dreys*. Dreys are made from twigs and leaves. They are lined with feathers and grass.



Look up at the trees in the winter when there are no leaves. You can see lots of nests. Some of them are squirrels' nests. The nests are built in the trees to keep out the predators on the ground. But they are low enough to stay put in high winds. Squirrels do not hibernate, but are less active in the winter and spend more time in their



nests, or holes. Because there are predators on the ground, squirrels build more than one home. That way, they have a safe place to run wherever they are.



Which baby animal is called



a kitten, but is not a cat? The answer is a baby squirrel.

Female squirrels have one or two small litters every year. The kittens are born without any hair. Hair comes in after about two weeks. Their eyes are closed and stay closed for four to five weeks. The kittens are completely helpless. They must depend on their mothers for food and protection. Like other mammals, kittens get milk from their mother and nurse until they can leave the nest. Then they are on their own.



baby squirrels napping



squirrel nest





# POLAR BEARS



Do you like to watch the polar bears at the zoo? They are friendly and funny. Some people think polar bear babies are the cutest and most playful mammals of all.

A polar bear that is pregnant eats all she can in August and September. She gains about 400 pounds! She builds a den in the snow when she is done eating. The den has tunnels and chambers. The mother-to-be then crawls in the den. She does not eat or drink the whole time she is there. She does not come out again until her babies are born.

It is important that a pregnant polar bear gets rest. She lowers her body activity. This is called *torpor*. During this time, a pregnant polar bear's temperature drops but not much.

Her body has to stay warm to help her babies grow. She sleeps, but not very deeply.

Like other species of bears, polar bear babies are called cubs. A female has a litter of cubs every two to three years. The cubs are born in early January. They weigh about a pound each. They are about 12 inches long. That is the size of a ruler!

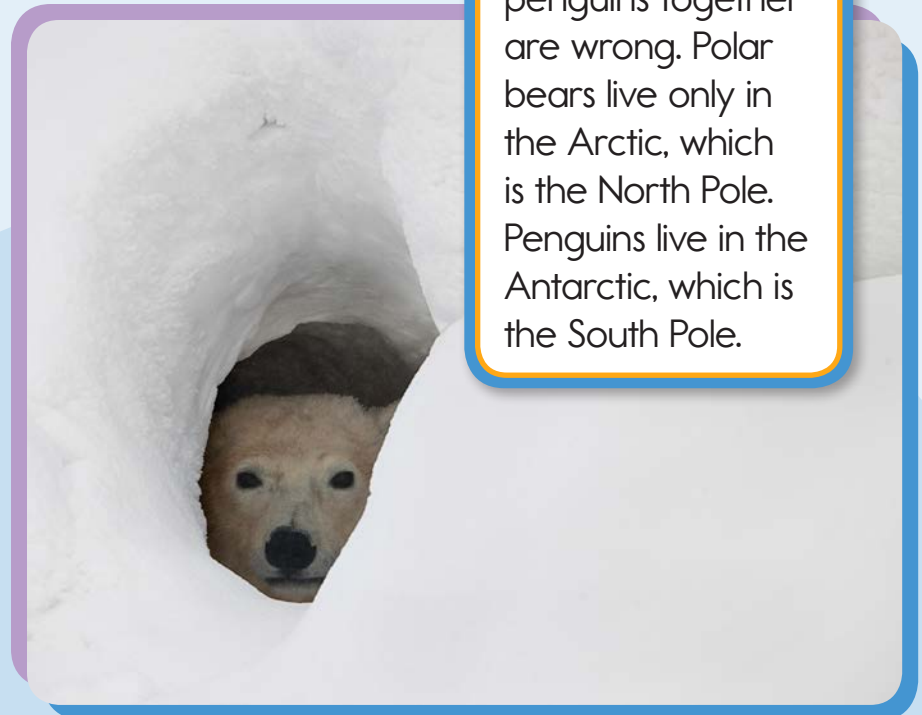
The cubs nurse, or drink their mother's milk. They grow quickly. Her milk has all the nutrients they need. The family comes out of the den in March or April. The mother leads her cubs to the sea. Now she can eat again!

The cubs nurse for at least twenty months. During that time, the mother teaches them how to hunt. Seals are their favorite meal. Polar bears have

no natural predators but can be killed by wolves. A mother polar bear does her best to keep her offspring safe. She is very protective. Her cubs stay with her until they are between four and eight years old. They leave when they are ready to have families of their own.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Pictures that show polar bears and penguins together are wrong. Polar bears live only in the Arctic, which is the North Pole. Penguins live in the Antarctic, which is the South Pole.





Name \_\_\_\_\_

 **Key Question**
*What do all baby mammals need?*
 **On Your Own**

1. Read the Key Question. Then read the selection as you look for details in the text that will help you answer the Key Question. Underline or circle the details.
2. Now look back at the selection. In the first column of the Main Idea and Details Chart below, write the main idea of the passage. Then write two details that support the main idea in the second column. Choose two other paragraphs from the passage. Write the main ideas of those paragraphs in the other two rows of the chart. Then write the details that support them.

Passage Main Idea: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Paragraph #___ Main Idea: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Paragraph #___ Main Idea: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

3. Think about the Key Question. Write your answer to the Key Question using the Main Idea and Details Chart you completed.

 **My First Answer**


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Name \_\_\_\_\_

 **Key Question**

*What do all baby mammals need?*

 **Share Your Ideas**

Meet with your team. Talk about each selection your team read.

1. Tell the team about the main idea of your selection. Show the Main Idea and Details Chart you completed.
2. Look at the charts your team members made. Compare the main idea and details in each of the passages. Answer these questions together.
  - *How are the baby mammals' needs alike and different?*
  - *How do the baby mammals get their needs met?*

Next, write the main idea that answers the Key Question on the Main Idea and Details Chart below. Write only the details that are in every passage your team read.

Baby mammals need _____.	• •
Baby mammals also need _____.	• •
Baby mammals also need _____.	• •

 **Answer the Key Question**

Review the main ideas and details on your team's chart. As a team, write an answer to the Key Question. Use the details from the selections to support your answer.

*What do all baby mammals need?*

**Our Team's Answer**

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