



MINNESOTA ZOO™
Changing how you see the world

Animal Behavior: An Introduction to Observation Pre-visit Activity

MN Graduation Standards supported:

Grades 9-12 Strand I.A
The student will understand the nature of scientific ways of thinking and that scientific knowledge changes and accumulates over time.

Grades 9-12 Strand I.B
The student will design and conduct a scientific investigation.

Vocabulary:

Animal Behavior
Observation
Ethogram

Links:

Minnesota Zoo website
www.mnzo.org

Smithsonian National Zoo
Animal Webcams
www.nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/WebCams/

San Diego Zoo Animal
Webcams
www.sandiegozoo.org/videos/index.html

Links to other AZA animal
Webcams
www.aza.org/ForEveryone/VirtualVisits/

Introduction:

Use this lesson to introduce animal observation.

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, students will

1. Observe the behavior of a zoo animal.
2. Make an ethogram based on the behaviors observed.

Procedure:

1. Log onto any of the links listed to use a zoo's web cam.
2. Have the students choose, or assign, which webcam they will use.
3. Have the students watch their animal for five minutes. As they observe, have them write down what their animal is doing. (Keep it simple, resting, eating, grooming, using enrichment, etc.)
4. After the 5 minutes, have them make a simple ethogram specific to their animal.
5. Based on their previous observation, have the students observe the animal again recording the animal's behavior in a simple ethogram.