

Predators, NOT Pets

Teacher's Lesson Plan
Time: 40 minutes



Introduction:

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge's mission is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected big cats with an emphasis on tigers, lions, leopards, and cougars. Our vision is through public education we can work to end the Exotic Animal Trade, making sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek no longer necessary; together, we can preserve and protect these magnificent predators in the wild for our children's future.

This lesson plan provides students the ability to identify what a predator is, why Turpentine Creek has to rescue and care for them, and that they are meant to be in the wild, not kept as pets.

Background:

Currently there are more tigers in backyards as pets (~5,000) in the United States than in the entire wild in Asia (~3,800). By teaching our students early on about how wildlife should be treated, we can make a huge impact on their survival. This lesson plan was developed to aid educators in teaching students the difference between domesticated and wild animals, why wild animals are not good pets, and what we can do to help save wildlife for the future. By learning how to protect wildlife, we can make a difference in animal welfare, saving animals from a life of abuse and neglect.

Title: Predators, NOT Pets

Theme: Predators are dangerous animals who hunt for their food, and use their skills as a predator for survival. Wild animals do not lose their natural hunting instincts and protective nature when taken out of the wild, and placed into captivity. Wild animals deserve a life of freedom. However, when people try and keep them as pets, they lose their fear of humans, cannot care for themselves, and cannot be released into the wild. Sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek save these animals from people who do not care for them, and provide them with the most natural life possible in captivity free from human contact.

Objective: Identify differences between predators and pets, and wild versus domesticated animals. Students will understand the issues facing exotic pet ownership, and what they can do to help protect wildlife for the future.

Resources: Lesson plan for appropriate grade level, printed activity books, and vocabulary list

Online Resources: TCWR Website, TCWR You-tube Channel, Lesson Plan Evaluation

Please feel free to use any worksheets appropriate for your classroom.

Teacher Materials: dry erase board and marker, pictures or videos of animals, crayons/markers, pencil.

*Worksheets are for educational, classroom or personal use only, and should not be shared publicly, reproduced, or posted Online at any time. Please contact TCWR's Education Department at: education@tcwr.org with questions or concerns.

Procedure 3rd grade:

3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-3



- 1) Introduce the theme of the lesson to the class. Ask students to form a list of characteristics of a predator, and their natural environment.
 - a) What is a predator?
 - b) Where do they live?
 - c) What do they eat?
 - 2) What happens when they are taken from the wild or kept as pets? **Worksheets 4 & 5**
 - a) How does this **influence their environment**? 3-LS3-2
 - b) Can they live a natural life?
 - 3) Have student create an explanation for the problems with having wild animals as pets, and if they can survive well, less well, or cannot survive at all: **Worksheets 6**, 3-LS4-3
 - 4) What is a domestic animal? Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics of a domesticated animal. **Worksheets 7-8**
 - a) Can they survive like a predator in the wild?
 - 5) Ask students to compare a predator and a pet. How are they the same? How are they different? **Worksheets 9-11**
 - 6) After brainstorming, discuss with students that wild animals are often kept as pets. Do they think it is a good idea to keep an animal that can eat you?
 - 7) Tigers have evolved to be apex predators, or at the top of the food chain. Use **worksheets 12-13**, students will fill in which traits help tigers survive, and then go over the answers with the class.
 - 8) Which animals are appropriate to keep as pets? **Worksheets 14 & 15**
 - 9) Vocabulary quiz- **worksheet 16**, can be done in class or as a homework assignment.
- 4-Activity sheets can be completed individually or as a group, they may use the vocabulary list to describe the activity, color picture sheets, and discuss questions and answers as a class.

Discussion:

- 1) What is something new that you learned about animals?
- 2) Should wild animals be kept as pets? Why?
- 3) How can we help save wild animals?
- 4) Where should wild animals be kept in captivity if they cannot go back into the wild?
- 5) What kind of animals are good pets?

Conclusion:

- 1) Wild animals should never be kept as pets. They are “**predators, not pets**”-say as a class together
- 2) We can protect wildlife by saving their natural habitat.
- 3) Domesticated animals are okay to keep as pets, and need to be cared for just like we care for ourselves.
- 4) Sanctuaries are important to save wild animals from captivity, giving them forever care.

Vocabulary List



Captivity: **not able** to roam free, need people to survive

Carnivore: an animal that eats **only meat**

Conservation: **protecting** of natural environment and wildlife

Dangerous: able or likely to **cause harm** or injury

Domestic Animal: tame or **friendly**, lives with humans, dogs, cats, farm animals

Endangered Species: a type of animal seriously at risk of **disappearing forever**, becoming **extinct**

Environment: **surroundings** or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives

Exotic Animal: **not native** or from the area that it lives in, introduced by people

Extinct: a species, family, or group of animals that **no longer exist** or are living

Freedom: not being restricted, able to **move around freely** and easily, wild

Herbivore: an animal that eats **only plants**

Omnivore: an animal that eats **both** meat and plants

Pet: a **domestic or tame** animal kept by people for companionship or pleasure

Predator: an animal that kills other animals for **food** to survive or live

Refuge: **Free** from harm, kept in captivity

Sanctuary: a place of **refuge or safety** in captivity, providing care for wild animals

Tame: a **not dangerous** animal or frightened of people, domesticated animals

Welfare: health, **happiness**, and well-being

Wild Animal: **not domestic** or tame, lives in natural environment, not with people

Circle where you think a Tiger should live. Put an X where they should not live.



To be happy, wild animals need: Space, food, water, shelter, and freedom.



Wild versus Captivity- How do tigers meet their needs for survival in the 3 environments below? Circle which images meet the tigers needs.



Image 1) Wild Tiger

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No

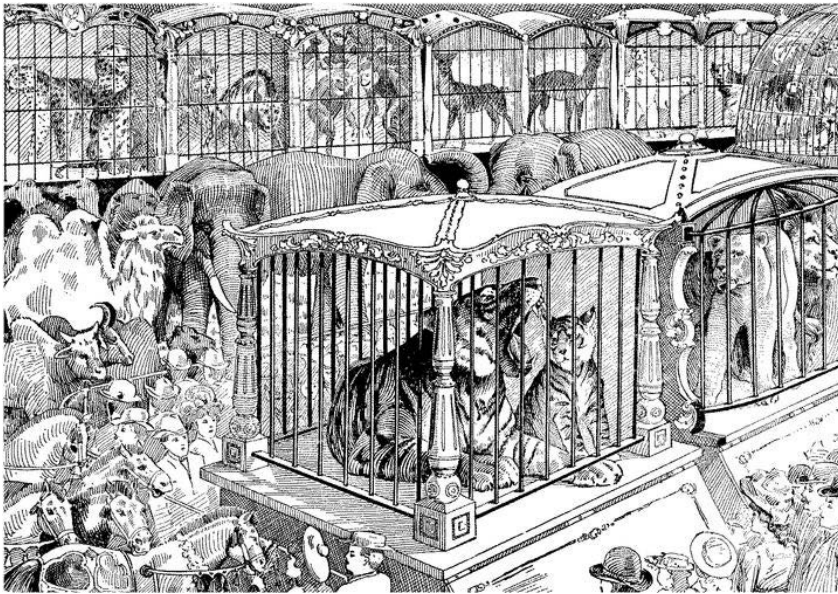


Image 2) Tiger in a Circus

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No



Image 3) Tiger in a Sanctuary

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

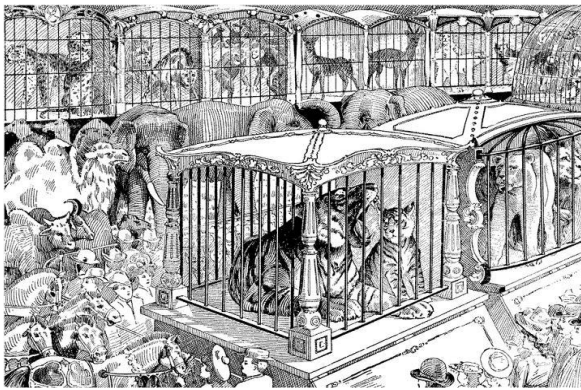
- a. Yes
- b. No

Wild vs. Captivity

In the 4 environments below, explain why a tiger could survive well, less well, or not survive at all. Use words from your vocabulary list.



1) Tiger in the Wild



2) Tiger in a Circus



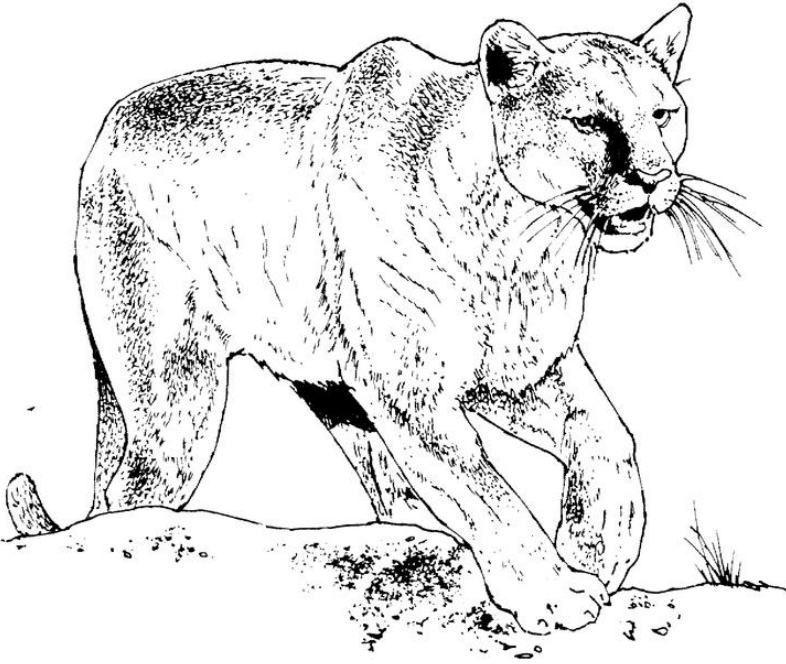
3) Tiger in a Sanctuary or Zoo



4) Tiger cub without mother

Observe the two images, and circle domestic or wild, and answer questions below.

Cougar



Is this cat: **WILD** or **TAME**

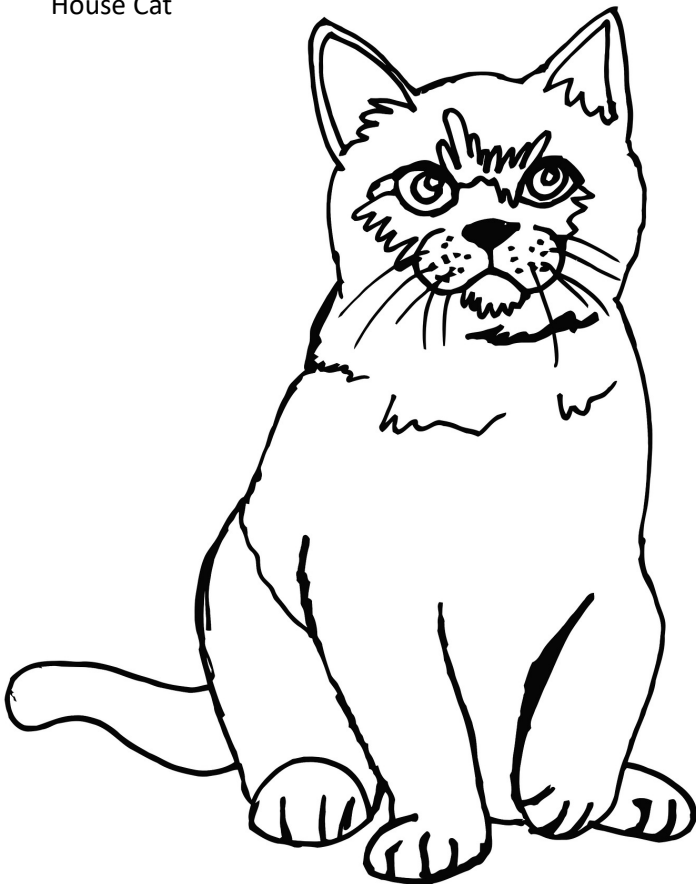
Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Cougars have over
40 names, and are often
called mountain lions,
pumas, and panthers.

House Cat



Is this cat: **WILD** or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Both house cats
and cougars can purr.

Observe the two images, and circle domestic or wild, and answer questions below.



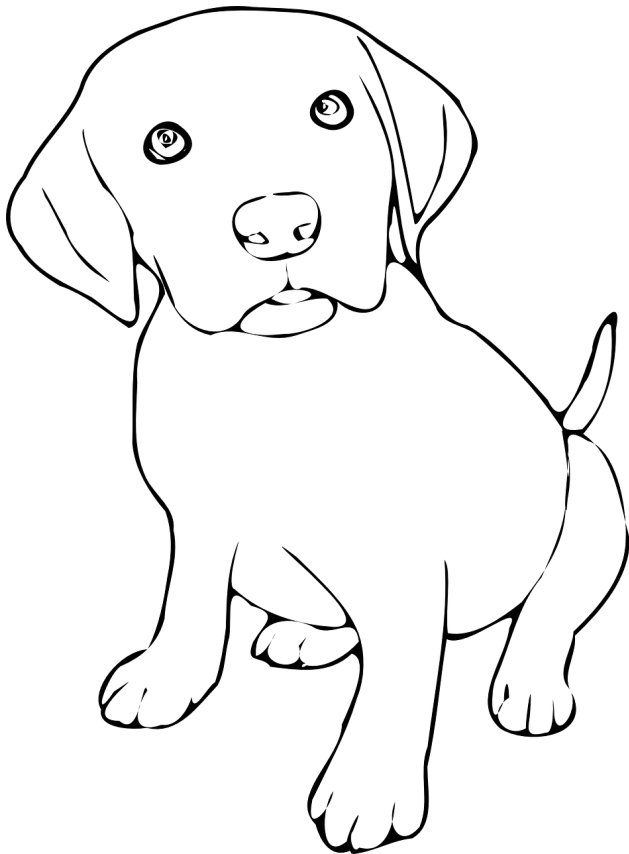
Is this animal: **WILD** or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Bears are 90%
vegetarian and mostly
eat plants and
scavenge for food.



Is this animal: **WILD** or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Dogs became
man's best friend over
9,000 years ago!



Draw your favorite **predator** below in its natural habitat. Include other plants and animals that it lives with, and helps it survive.

Now draw your favorite **domesticated animal** in its natural habitat. Include other plants and animals that it lives with, and helps it survive.

Natural Habitat Discussion:

Predator Picture:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite predator? _____
- 2) Where does it live? _____
- 3) What other animals live there? _____
- 4) What do you think it eats? _____
- 5) What would happen if it lost its home? _____
- 6) Why is it not a good pet? _____

- 7) How can you help protect your favorite wild animal? _____

Pet Picture:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite pet? _____
- 2) Where does it live? _____
- 3) What does it eat? _____
- 4) Why is it different from a wild animal? _____

- 5) How is it a good pet? _____

- 6) How can you help make sure it is happy and healthy? _____

Once you are finished, you will discuss your picture with the class.



Wild Animal vs. Pet Class Discussion Questions:

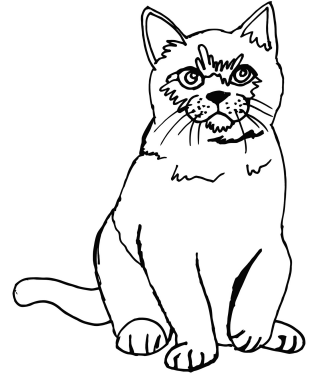


List 3 things that make a wild animal **different** from a pet

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

List 3 things that make a wild animal and pets **similar**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____



Describe your favorite **predator** and what other living things it has in its environment to survive:

Describe your favorite pet and what other living things it has in its environment to survive:

Join TCWR in taking a wildlife pledge! I (your name) _____ pledge to help protect wildlife by:

I _____ pledge to help protect domestic animals by:

Label the tigers face words below, and learn how tigers use their unique bodies to survive.



What does the tiger use each body part for? Guess below, and check the answer sheet!

Eyes: _____

Ears: _____

Tongue: _____

Whiskers: _____

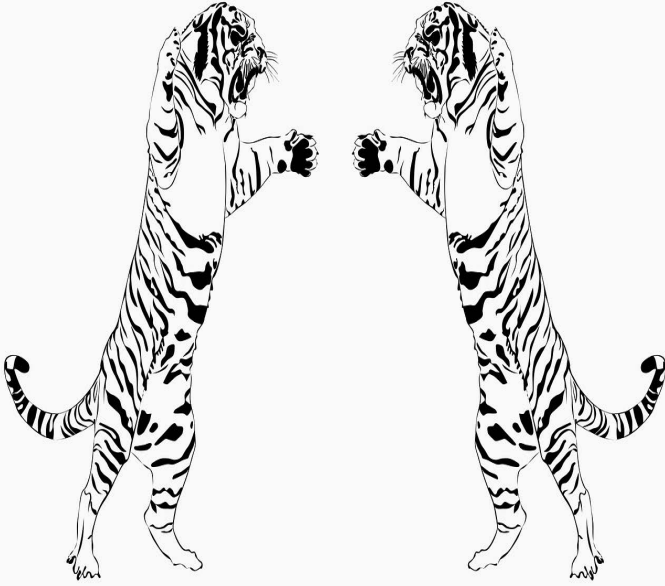
Nose: _____

Stripes: _____

Fur: _____

Teeth: _____

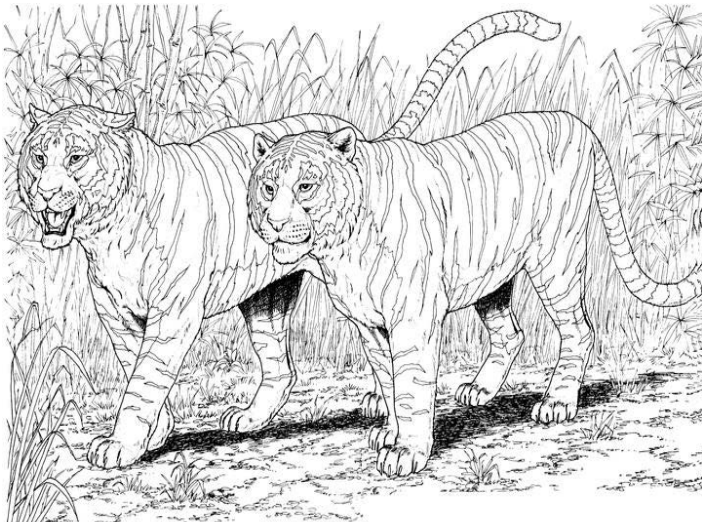
Tigers are apex predators, meaning that they are at the top of the food chain. They are also solitary, meaning they live alone in the wild. How would they use their unique body parts for survival in the wild when competing with other tigers?



Tigers defending their territory:

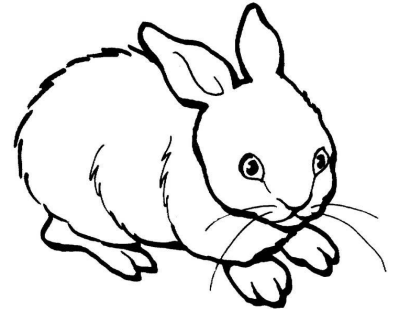
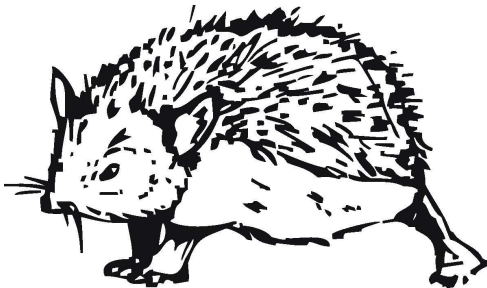
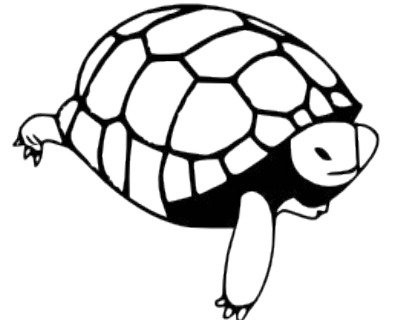
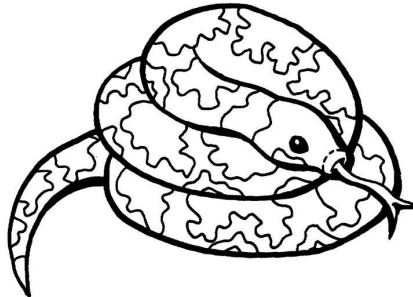
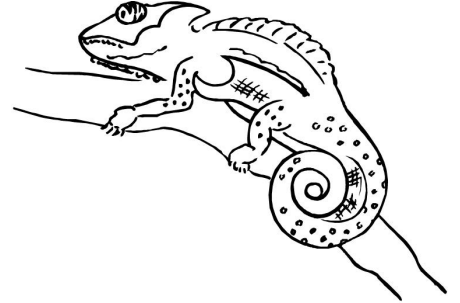
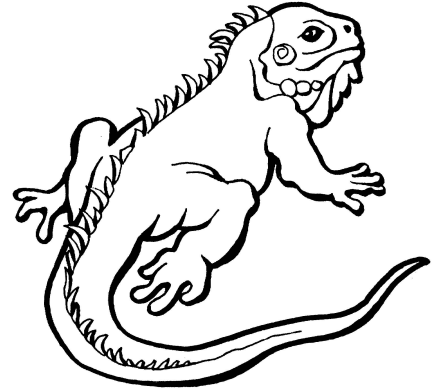
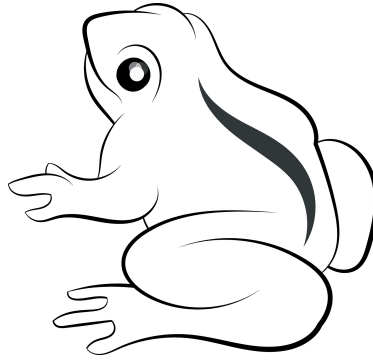
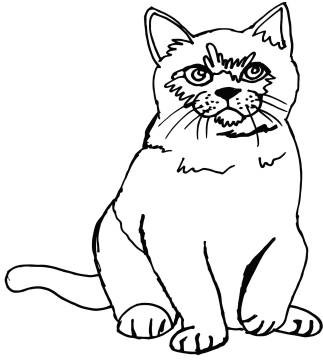
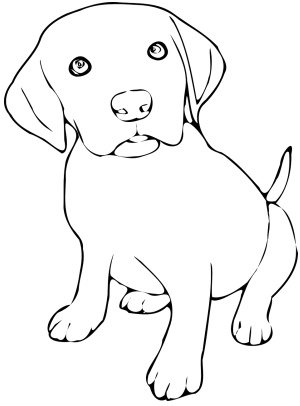


Tiger hunting:



Tiger mother caring for her cub:

Imagine you walk into a pet store, and below are the animals available for pets. Circle the animals that you can also find in the wild.

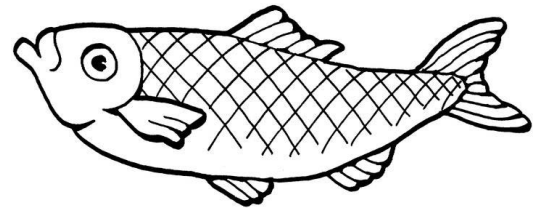
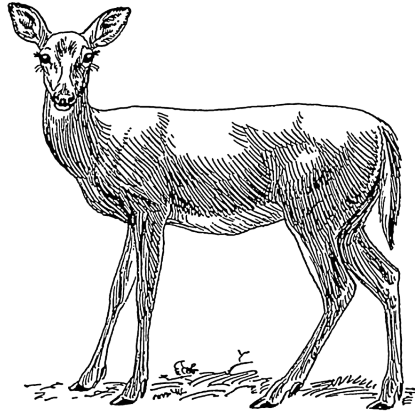


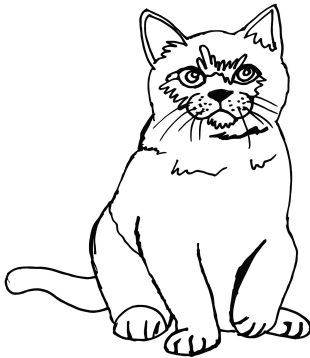
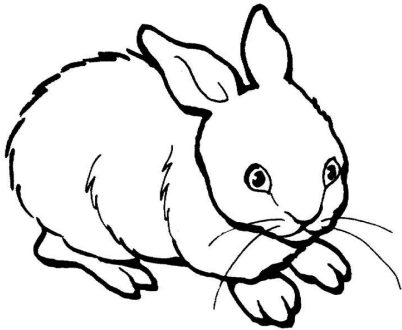
When buying a pet, it is important to make sure you know where it comes from. Many exotic animals are sadly stolen from the wild to be sold, and are not supposed to be pets. Do not keep wild animals as pets and you will be a responsible pet owner!

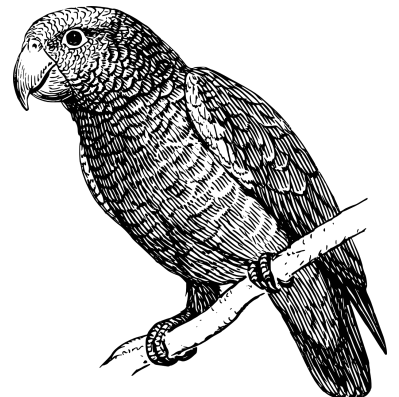
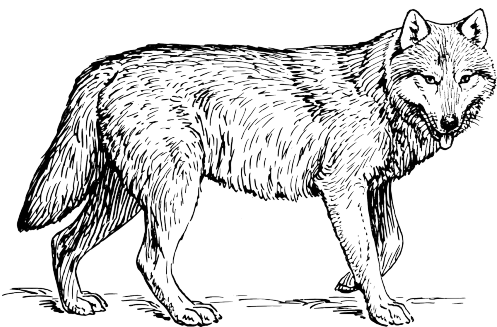


Underneath each animal, write whether it is a wild animal, tame, or both.

Then write if it is a predator or prey. There can be more than one answer.





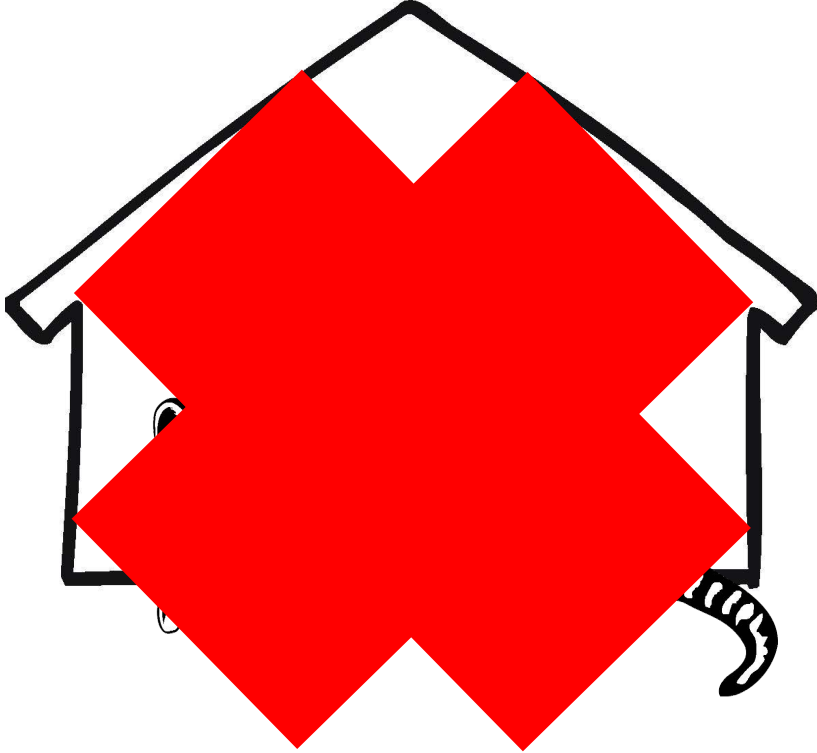
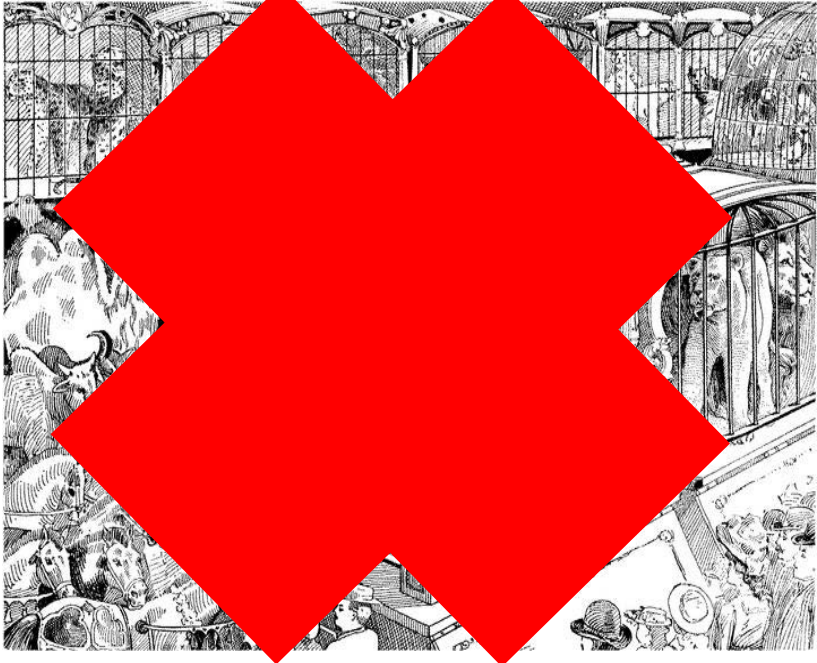
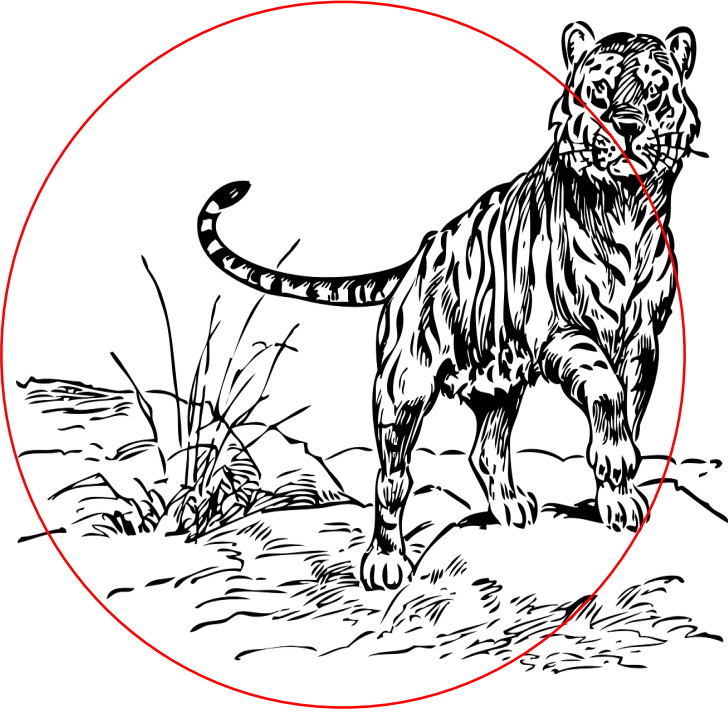


Fill in the blanks below using your vocabulary sheet

- A _____ should never be kept as a pet. They should live in their natural _____ or surroundings, not with people.
- An _____ eats plants and meat, while a _____ only eats meat. _____ only eat plants.
- Animals that are not native to an area are called an _____.
- _____ are animals that are at risk of disappearing forever. If they disappear, they are called _____, and no longer exist.
- Animals that are in _____ depend on people to survive, and are not free to go anywhere they want. They should be kept in a zoo or _____.
- _____ animals are good pets, they are friendly and are happy to live with humans. They are _____ and not dangerous.
- All animals should be given _____, and not be restricted to move around in both the wild and captivity.
- A _____ is a companion animal, people keep as a companion to be happy. Exotic animals are _____, and should not be kept as a pet.
- _____ protects the natural environment for wildlife, and keeps the Earth clean and safe.
- Animals that kill other animals for food is called a _____.
- The most important thing for any living being is it's _____, which is health, happiness, and well-being.
- Turpentine Creek is a _____, providing forever care to exotic animals in captivity, keeping them safe from harm.



Circle where you think a Tiger should live. Put an X where they should not live.



To be happy, wild animals need: Space, food, water, shelter, and freedom.



Wild versus Captivity- How do tigers meet their needs for survival in the 3 environments below? Circle which images meet the tigers needs.

Teacher Key



Image 1) Wild Tiger

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No

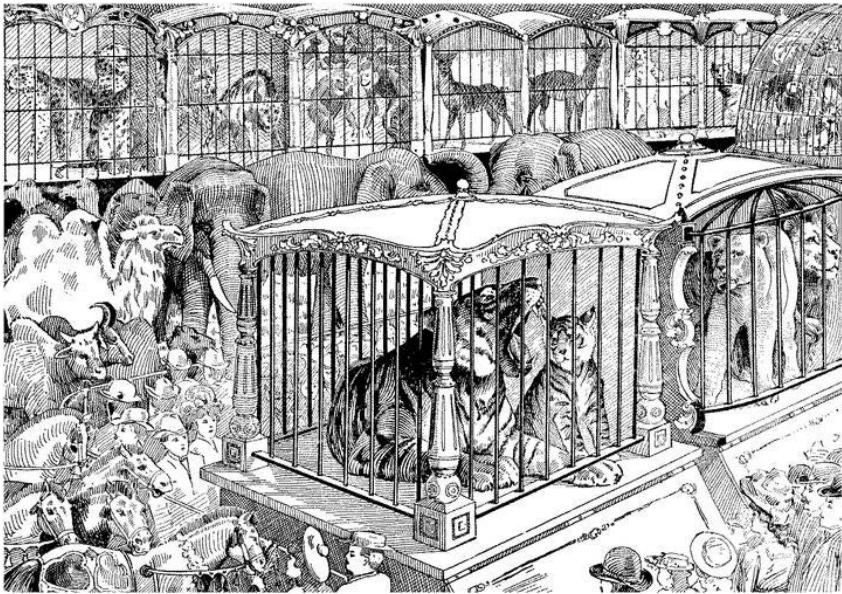


Image 2) Tiger in a Circus

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No



Image 3) Tiger in a Sanctuary

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

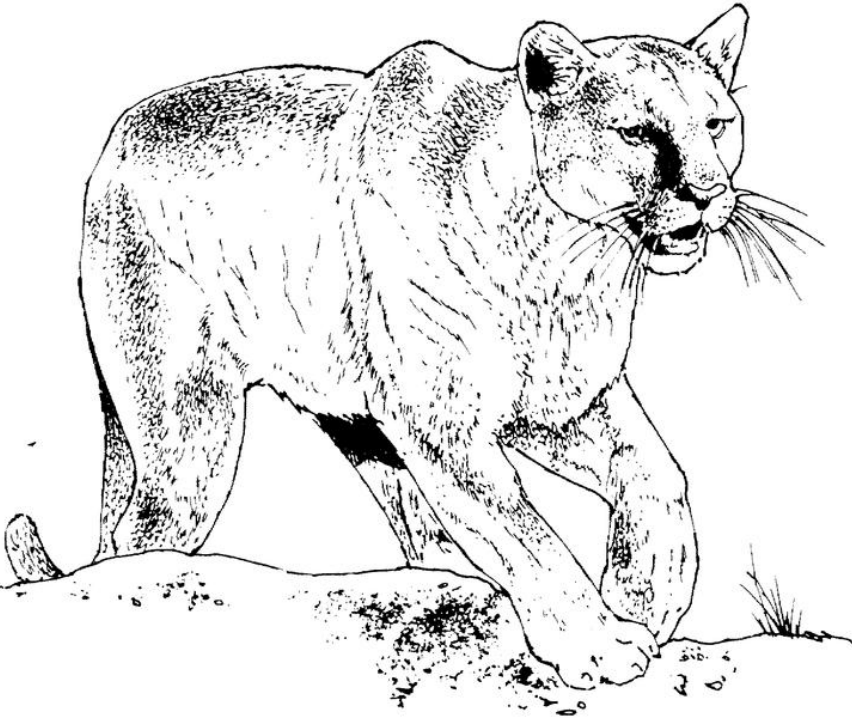
- a. Yes
- b. No

Teacher Key: Fill in the blanks below using your vocabulary sheet

- A **wild animal** should never be kept as a pet. They should live in their natural **environment** or surroundings, not with people.
- An **omnivore** eats plants and meat, while a **carnivore** only eats meat. - **herbivore** only eat plants.
- Animals that are not native to an area are called an **exotic animal**.
- **Endangered Species** are animals that are at risk of disappearing forever. If they disappear, they are called **extinct**, and no longer exist.
- Animals that are in **captivity** depend on people to survive, and are not free to go anywhere they want. They should be kept in a zoo or **sanctuary**.
- **Domestic** animals are good pets, they are friendly and are happy to live with humans. They are **tame** and not dangerous.
- All animals should be given **freedom**, and not be restricted to move around in both the wild and captivity.
- A **pet** is a companion animal, people keep as a companion to be happy. Exotic animals are **dangerous**, and should not be kept as a pet.
- **Conservation** protects the natural environment for wildlife, and keeps the Earth clean and safe.
- Animals that kill other animals for food is called a **predator**.
- The most important thing for any living being is it's **welfare**, which is health, happiness, and well-being.
- Turpentine Creek is a **refuge**, providing forever care to exotic animals in captivity, keeping them safe from harm.



Cougar



Is this cat: **WILD** or TAME

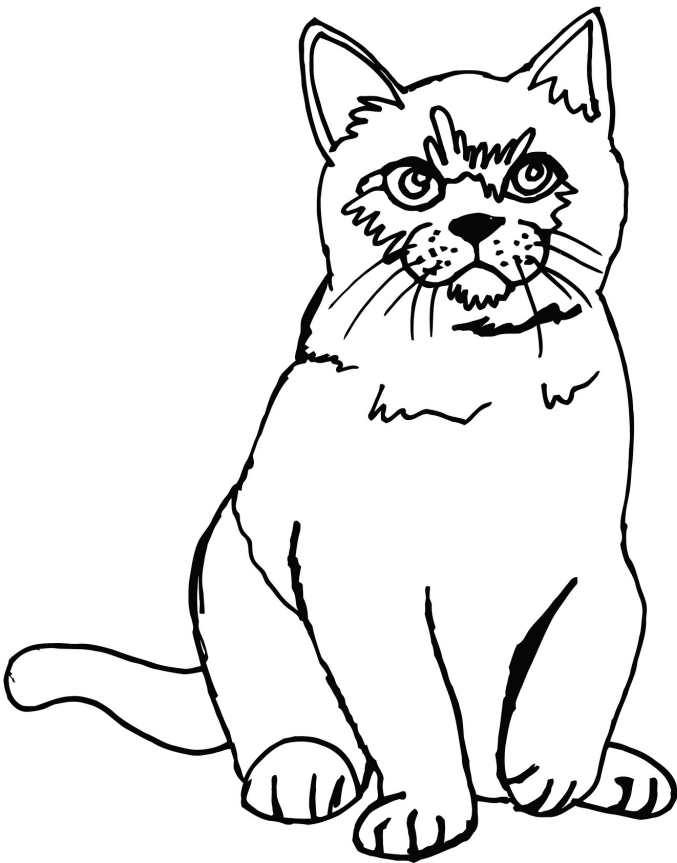
Is it a predator? **YES** or NO

Is it a good pet? YES or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Cougars have over 40 names, and are often called mountain lions, pumas, and panthers.

House Cat



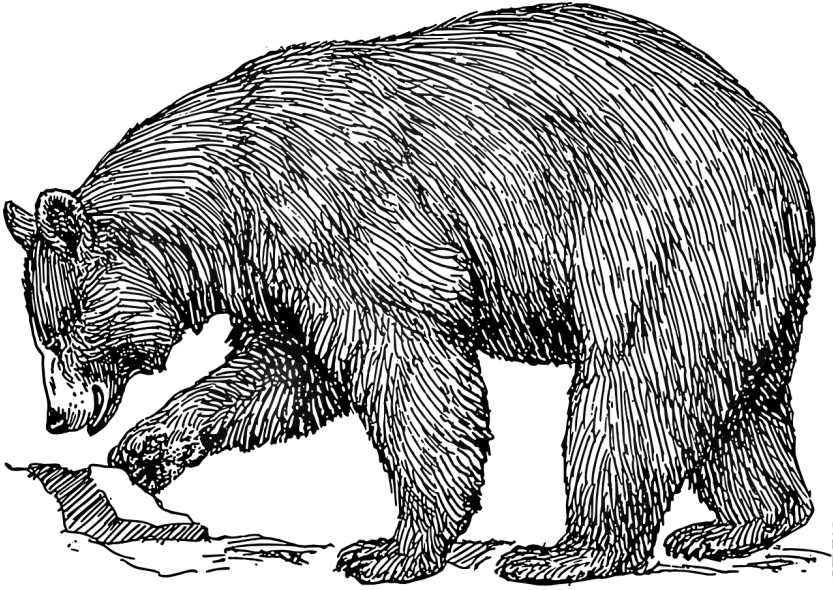
Is this cat: WILD or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or NO

Is it a good pet? **YES** or NO

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: both cougars and house cats can purr.



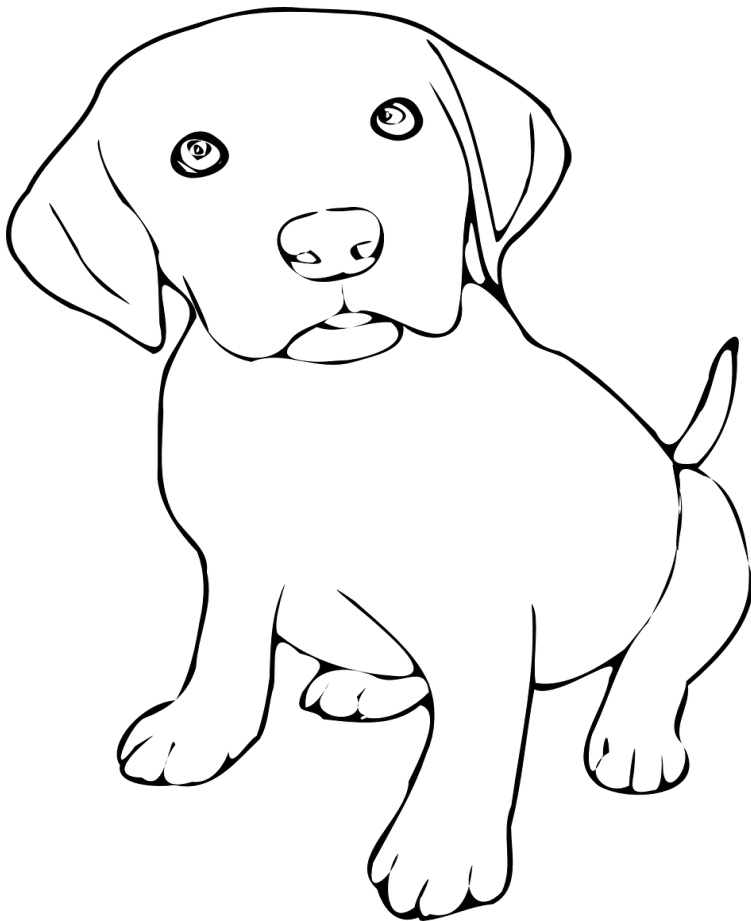
Is this animal: **WILD** or TAME

Is it a predator? **YES** or NO

Is it a good pet? YES or **NO**

Is this a CARNIVORE or **OMNIVORE**

Fun Fact: Bears are 90% vegetarian, and can smell 2,000 times better than a human!



Is this animal: WILD or **TAME**

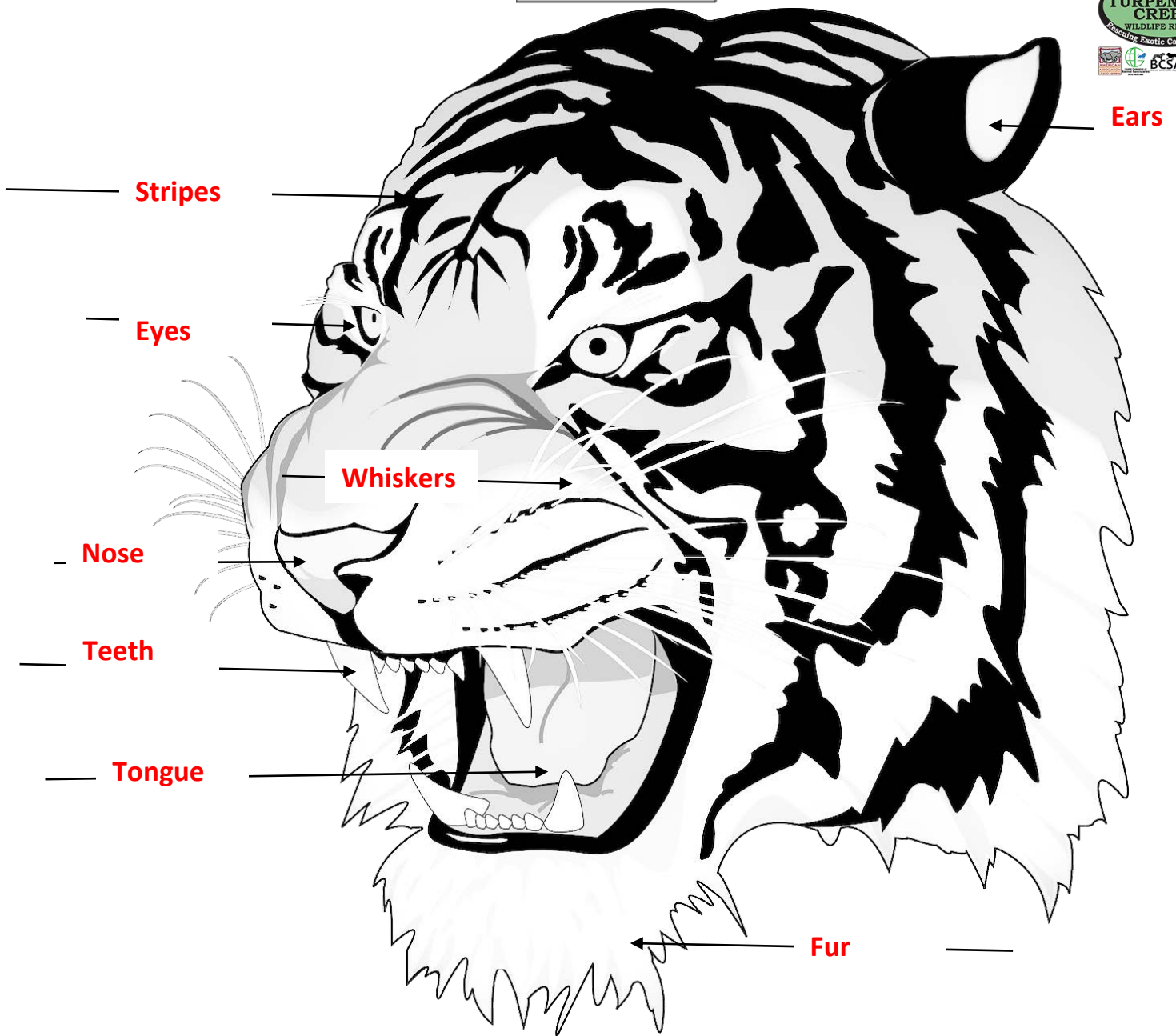
Is it a predator? YES or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or NO

Is this a CARNIVORE or **OMNIVORE**

Fun Fact: Dogs became man's best friend over 9,000 years ago!





Eyes: Tigers have very good eye sight, and use their eyes to hunt and find food.

Ears: The spots on the back of their ears look like eyes, so other predators do not sneak up on them.

Tongue: Their tongues feel like sand paper, and help the big cat eat its food by removing fur.

Whiskers: They are very sensitive, and allow cats to feel how big the space around them is.

Nose: Tigers do not use their nose to smell for food, but to communicate with other animals in the wild.

Stripes: Used for camouflage, or helping the tiger blend in with its surroundings, it makes them look smaller.

Fur: Mammals have fur to keep them warm, and also protect them from being hurt.

Teeth: Tigers use their teeth to kill their food, and can feel the heart stop beating through their teeth!

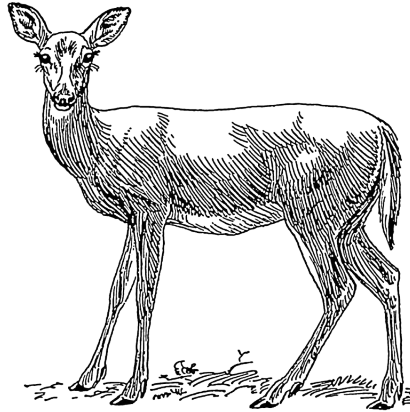
Underneath each animal, write whether it is a wild animal, tame, or both.

Then write if it is a predator or prey. There can be more than one answer.



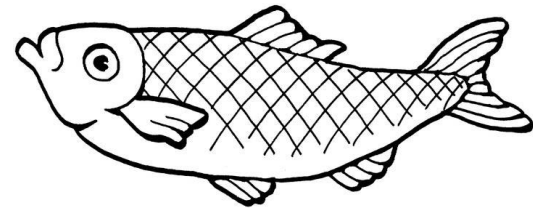
Wild animal

Predator



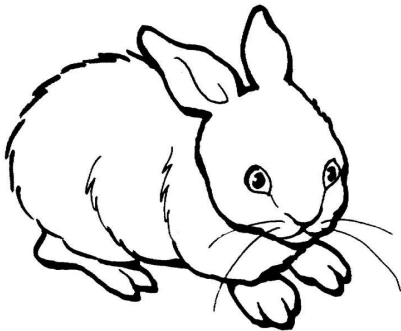
Wild animal

Prey



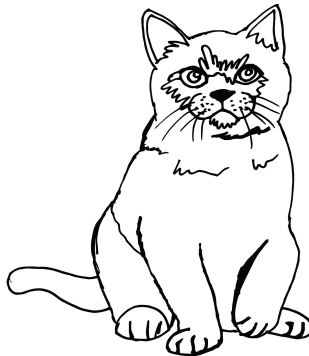
Wild animal tame

Predator and prey



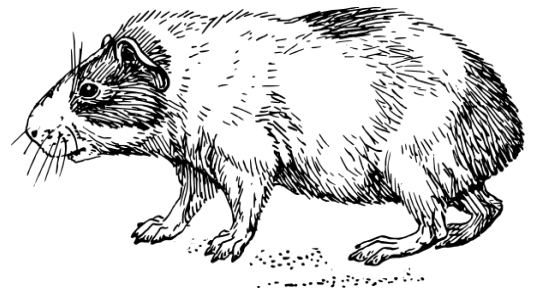
Wild animal Tame

Prey



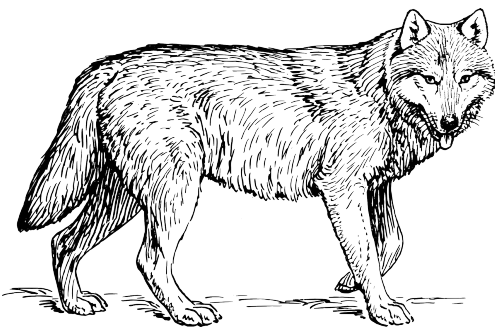
Tame

Predator



Tame

Neither



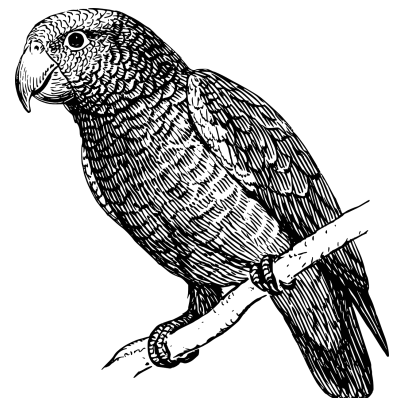
Wild animal

Predator



Wild animal

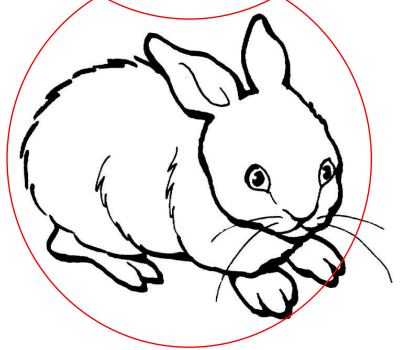
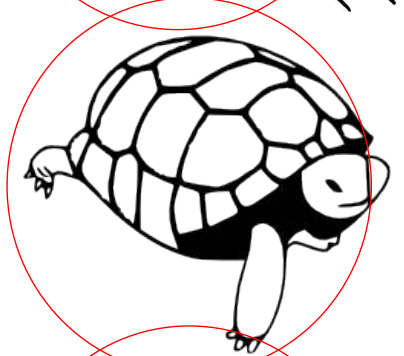
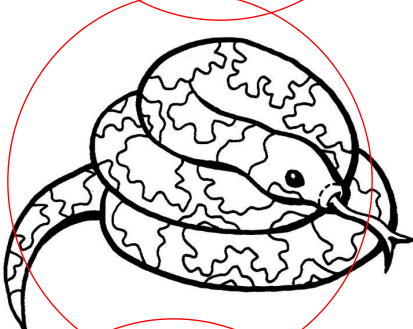
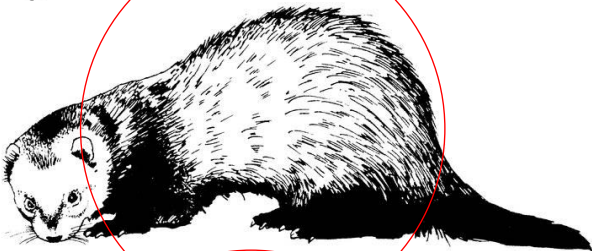
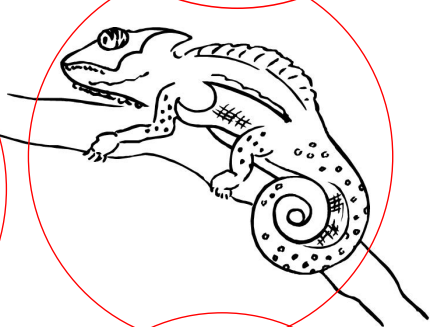
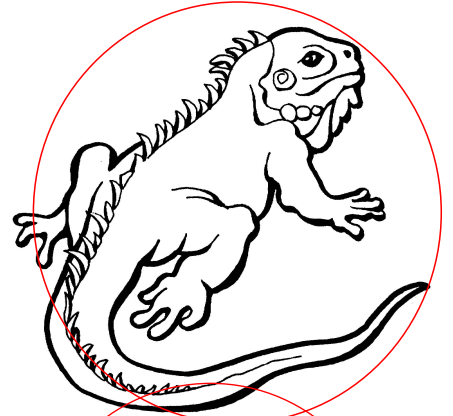
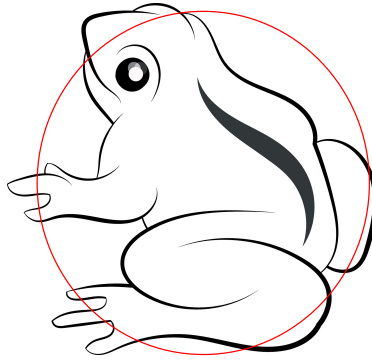
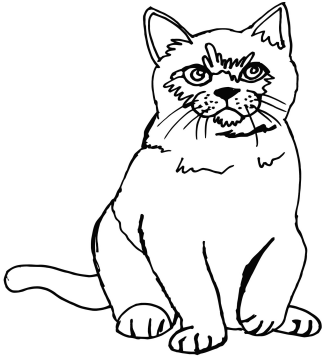
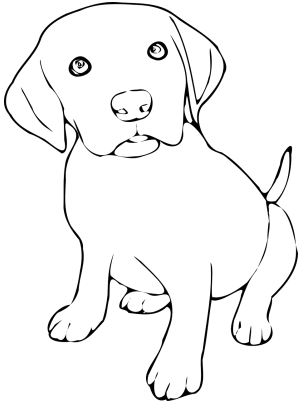
Prey



Wild animal Tame

Prey

Imagine you walk into a pet store, and below are the animals available for pets. Circle the animals that you can also find in the wild.



When buying a pet, it is important to make sure you know where it comes from. Many exotic animals are sadly stolen from the wild to be sold, and are not supposed to be pets. Do not keep wild animals as pets and you will be a responsible pet owner!

