

Zoos Classroom Activity

The Classroom Activity introduces students to the context of a performance task so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Contextual elements include: an understanding of the setting or situation in which the task is placed, potentially unfamiliar concepts that are associated with the scenario; and **key terms** or vocabulary students will need to understand in order to meaningfully engage with and complete the performance task. The Classroom Activity is also intended to generate student interest in further exploration of the key idea(s). The Classroom Activity should be easy to implement with clear instructions.

Please read through the entire Classroom Activity before beginning the activity with students to ensure any classroom preparation can be completed in advance.

Throughout the activity it is permissible to pause and ask students if they have any questions.

As a part of this activity, the facilitator will lead a discussion that uses a Venn diagram as an organizer. The purpose of the Venn diagram is to assist students in their understanding of the key concepts that are included in the performance task. Students will **not** be tested on the use of the Venn diagram.

Resources Needed:

- Chart paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Paper
- Pens/Pencils
- Some method of displaying ancillary materials¹

Learning Goal:

- Students will understand the context of the key concepts related to the topic:
 - Animals living in zoos have different experiences than animals living in the wild.

Students will understand the key term:

- **Habitat:** the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives or grows

Note: This definition is provided here for the convenience of the facilitator. Students are expected to understand this key term in the context of the task, not memorize the definition.

¹ Facilitators can decide whether they want to display ancillary materials using an overhead projector or computer/Smartboard, or whether they want to produce them as a handout for students.

Zoos Classroom Activity

[Purpose: The facilitator’s goal is to introduce students to the key terms they will need to be familiar with to successfully complete the performance task. The activity will activate students’ prior knowledge of zoos and what life is like for animals in zoos and what life is like for animals in the wild.]

Facilitator says: “Today we are going to have a conversation about animals and zoos. First, can anyone tell me what *habitat* means?”

[Allow 2-3 minutes for student responses. Then, write the following definition on the board. *Habitat: the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives or grows.* Acknowledge any students who were able to correctly define the term.]

Facilitator says: “Today we’re going to think about the different habitats of animals.”

[Have students form small groups of three.]

Facilitator says: “What do you know about zoos? Discuss what you know about zoos with two other students. If you haven’t been to a zoo, that is okay. Tell your partners what you do know about zoos.”

[Give the students approximately 3 minutes to share with each other. You can circulate around the room and facilitate the groups that may need support. Reiterate, as need be, that direct experience with zoos is not necessary for the discussion. Knowledge of zoos from books, movies, or television is sufficient.]

[Invite students to share with the whole class the key ideas from their small group discussions. Discuss for approximately 3 minutes.]

Facilitator says: “A zoo is a place where many kinds of animals are kept so that people can see them. Let’s think about what it might be like for animals to live in a zoo and what it is like for animals to live in the wild.”

Facilitator says: “In your group, choose an animal that you might find at the zoo.” [Provide examples such as lions, parrots, monkeys, elephants, rhinoceroses, and leopards.]

[Pass out blank sheets of paper and pens/pencils or ask students to take out a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil.]

Facilitator says: “Make a list of what it is like for that animal to live in the wild and what it is like for the same animal to live in a zoo.”

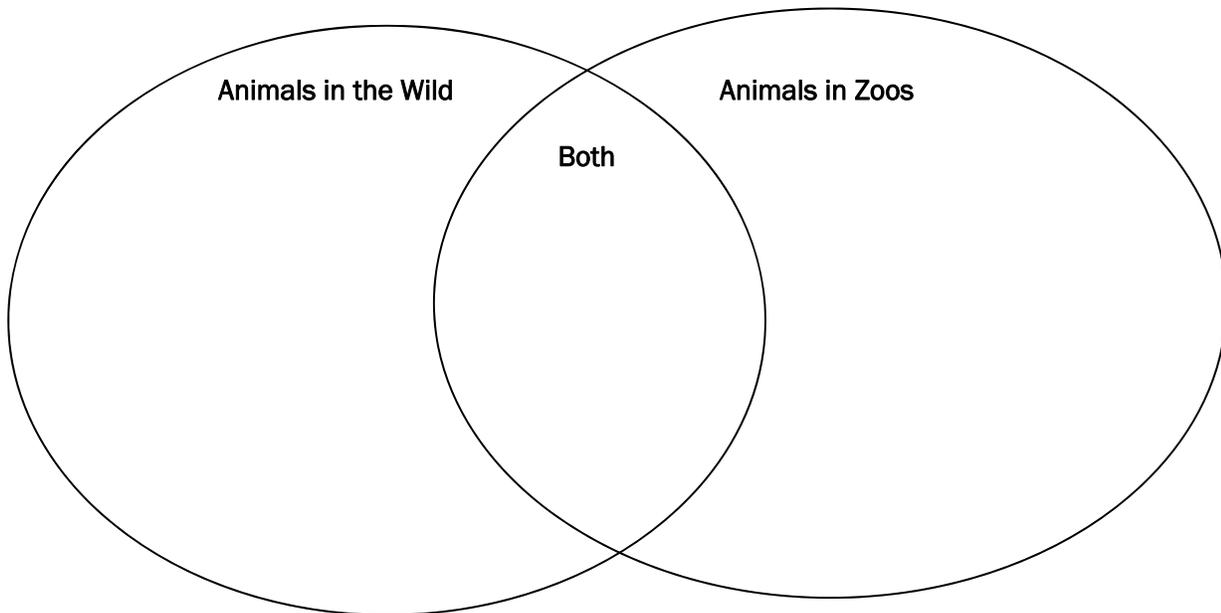
[Allow students to discuss and make notes for 3-5 minutes.]



[Below is an example of some characteristics that students might generate and share within their small groups. This sample list is not exhaustive nor is it meant to indicate how short or long your class' list should be. Your students will probably come up with a variation of this example.]

	In a Zoo	In the Wild
Lions	small space to live, three meals a day, close by to people	lots of space to hunt, need to find own food, may not see humans
Parrots	less space to fly, safe from predators, lots of food, maybe clipped wings	lots of space to fly, need to find food
Monkeys	toys to play with, time to sleep, lots of food, close to people, someone to fix them if they get hurt.	competition for food, more places to travel to, more trees to play in
Elephants	small space to live, close to people, not a lot of other elephants, lots of food	lots of space, lots of other elephants, maybe danger from hunters
Rhinoceroses	small space, close to people, lots of food, veterinarian to help if you get hurt	lots of space, competition for food, maybe fun looking for food, can fight with other animals
Leopards	close to people, three meals a day, small enclosure	alone in the wild, space to run free, need to hunt for food

[Draw a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles on the chart paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard (or display Figure 1). Label the first circle *Animals in the Wild* and the second circle *Animals in Zoos*. The overlapping section should be labeled *Both* (see below).]



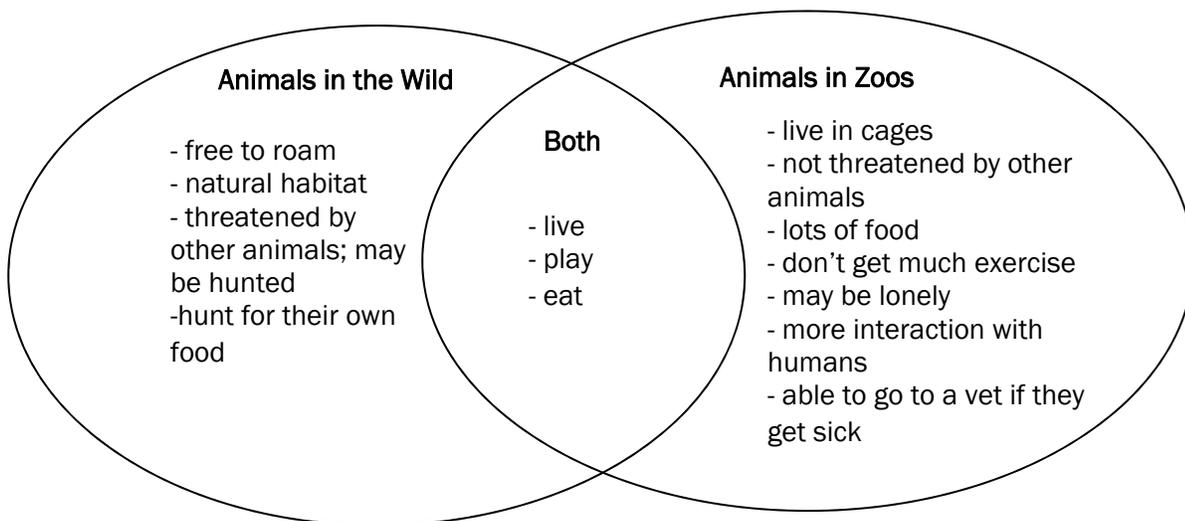
Facilitator says: “In the left circle I have written *Animals in the Wild* and in the right circle I have written *Animals in Zoos*. Where the two circles overlap, I have written *Both*.

Facilitator says: “What are some general observations you can make about what it is like for animals to live in zoos? What are some general observations you can make about what it is like for animals to live in the wild?”

[For about 5 minutes, work as a class to make some generalizations about the difference between living in a zoo and living in the wild. Work together to place ideas in the appropriate places on the Venn diagram. Some ideas may be hard to place at first; invite students to explain where they think ideas would go best. Support them as appropriate.]

[Check for understanding of the experiences that are added to the Venn diagram. If certain students are unfamiliar with zoos, invite other students who know more to explain what they know. Supplement student explanations with your own knowledge as appropriate.]

[Below is an example of some characteristics that might be identified and placed on the Venn diagram. This example list is not exhaustive nor is it meant to indicate how short or long your class’ list should be. Your students will probably come up with a variation on this.]

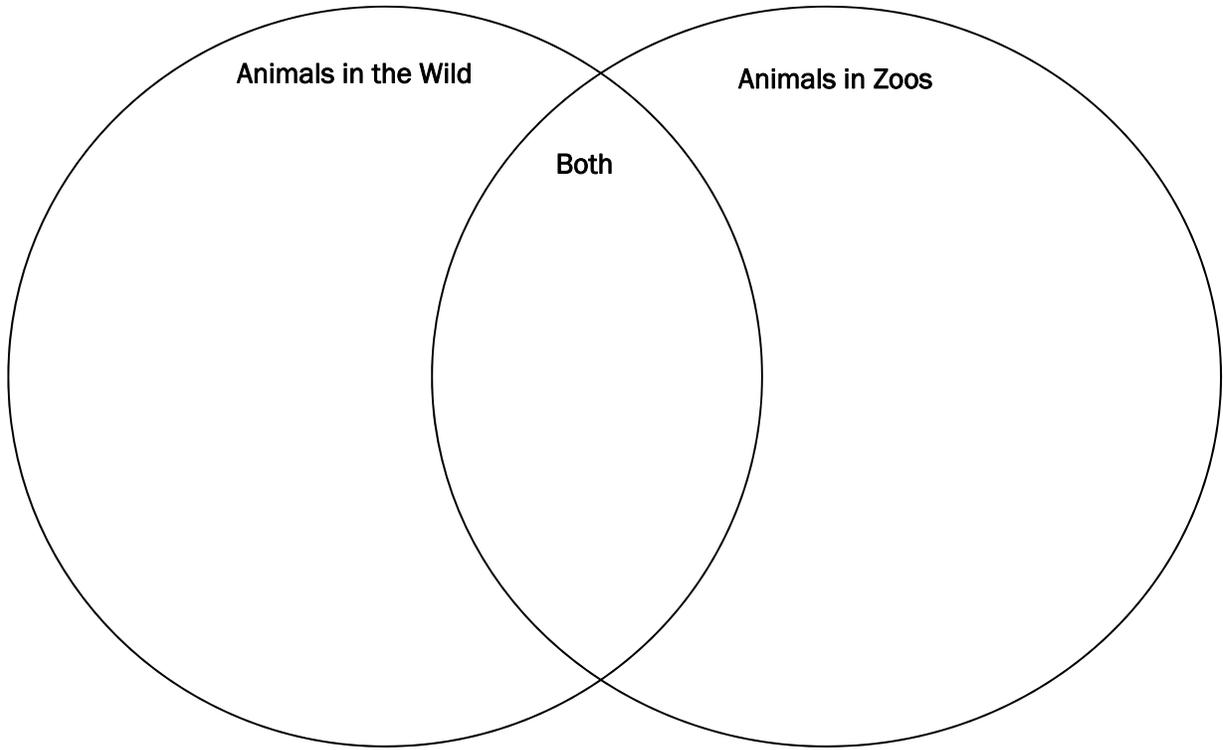


Facilitator says: “In your performance task, you will do research on zoos. The discussion we had today should help prepare you for the research and writing you will be doing in the performance task.”

Ancillary Material

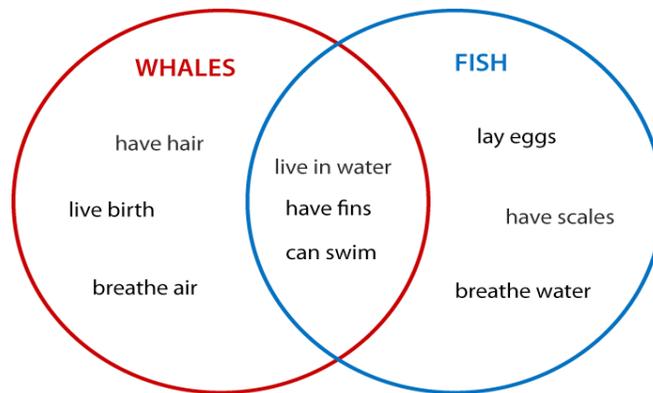
Figure 1

Venn Diagram



Teacher Resource for Venn Diagrams

Using the knowledge of the scope and sequence of instruction in the district/school, and the personal experience working with the students who participate in this activity, it may be necessary for the facilitator to provide a brief example of how a Venn diagram works. Below you will find an example of a Venn diagram and a description of how it should be used.



1. Two circles are to be drawn so that the circles intersect in the middle.
2. Each circle is labeled with the topics that are being compared (e.g., *Whales* is the title in circle on the left and *Fish* is the title in the circle on the right).
3. Any information that is true only of the topic in the circle on the left (e.g., Whales) is placed in the portion of the circle that does not intersect with the circle on the right.
4. Any information that is true only of the topic in the circle on the right (e.g., Fish) is placed in the portion of the circle that does not intersect with the circle on the left.
5. Any information that is true of both topics is placed in the intersection of the circles.
6. Viewing the Venn diagram, students see the differences (the responses included in the nonintersecting portions of the circles) and the similarities (the responses included in the intersecting portion of the circles) between what is being compared.