



OUR COMMUNITY | OUR STORY

What are Your Koalifications? Pre Visit Materials

Exploring Zoo Jobs

Objective: Students will have a general understanding of some of the basics elements of four major careers at the zoo.

Recommended Grade Levels: K-2

Time Required: 20 minutes

Materials:

Projector

Computer

Attached summaries of four major zoo jobs

Printouts of the attached job titles

One copy of the attached statements (cut out and dropped into a container)

Instructions:

1. Set up the class room by taping one job title in each corner.
2. Read the job descriptions for zookeeper, horticulturist, researcher, and veterinarian aloud.
3. Have students stand behind their chairs.
4. Pull out and read one of the statements.
5. Have students move to the corner where they think that career is.
6. Repeat 9 more times.

Job Summaries

Researcher:

Researchers have to pay close attention to detail so that they can note any tiny changes in the environment. Their job is to find out how the animals are behaving in the wild and if the number of animals is getting smaller or not. Researchers answer questions like:

- What animals were here?
- Were they here recently, or a long time ago?
- Are there more now than there were last year? Or less? Why?

The answers to these questions help the researchers figure out how they can help the animals survive in the wild. Researchers also make sure to share what they have learned by watching the animals in the wild. That way the people at the zoo can help the zoo animals live lives as similar as possible to their relatives on the wild.

Horticulturist

The horticulturist works with all the plants in the zoo. Their job is not only to keep the zoo looking nice for the visitors and animals but to provide plenty of leafy greens for the animals to eat. They also help plan the exhibits so that all the animals are near the same plants they would be near in the wild. Horticulturists answer questions like:

- Does this plant need lots of sun? Or some shade?
- How much water does it need?
- Do any animals eat this plant in the wild?

The answers to these questions help horticulturists give the zoo plants the best care possible. Which means the animals will get the tastiest leaves possible!

Veterinarian

The zoo veterinarian is responsible for the health of the animals. They give the animals their annual check ups (just like you get from the doctor) and they look for ways to keep the animals healthy and strong. Sometimes an animal gets sick and then the veterinarian has to figure out what is wrong with the animal so they can make it better. Veterinarians answer questions like:

- Is this animal the right weight?
- Is this animal behaving like it should?
- Does this animal have the right colors (pink tongue, black nose, etc.)

The answers to these questions help the veterinarian decide if the animal is getting all the right foods and vitamins, whether the animal needs extra care, or if it needs more exercise.

Zookeeper

The zookeeper takes care of a set group of animals. They get to know all the animals they care for. This is important because it is an animal's behavior that tells the zookeeper when something might be wrong. The zookeeper also handles the daily care for the animals. They

feed them, make sure they have clean water, and a clean living area. Zookeepers also teach the animals certain behaviors to make it easier for the vet to treat them. Zookeepers ask questions like:

Is the animal eating its usual amount of food?

Is the animal drinking the usual amount of water?

Is the animal interacting with the other animals?

The answers to these questions tell the zookeeper if something is wrong with an animal, whether the animal needs something to be more comfortable, and how the animal is getting along with the other animals.

Statements

When your pet gets sick, I take care of them.

I look at animal x-rays.

I tell other people when the animals need medicine.

I check the animals over to make sure they are healthy.

When an animal gets hurt I decide if they need surgery.

I teach the animals to do certain things.

I feed the animals.

I clean the animals living areas.

I make sure the animals have enough water.

I know the personality of each of my animals.

I make guesses about how animals are doing in the wild after I look for clues they may have left behind.

I find out how the animals in the wild behave so the zoo can help their animals do the same things.

I track the animals in the wild.

I find out how people are changing animal behaviors.

I try to count how many animals are in an area.

I take care of the plants you see in the zoo.

I cut off some tree branches so that the animals can eat them.

I match the plants with the animals they usually live near in the wild.

Sometimes I have to dig up trees so I can move them to a new part of the zoo.

Sometimes I have to cut up a whole tree that fell down so the animals can have something to climb on.