

- Have each student choose an animal to study, paying close attention to behaviors that are typical for each animal. Students can create dioramas of the animals in their environments performing a common behavior.
- Invite a talking bird and its owner to visit the classroom. Explain to the children the need to remain seated and calm when the bird visits. Give students the opportunity to 'communicate' with the bird by asking it questions and waiting for responses from the bird. Have a number of students record the bird's behavior in the classroom, listing the noises it makes and its actions while in the room. After the animal departs, ask the students to write a paragraph explaining whether or not the bird was just repeating sounds or really having a conversation.
- Read E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* to the class. Ask the students to compare and contrast the behaviors of the characters in the book with real animals. Using information from encyclopedias and other references, create a bulletin board listing typical behaviors for spiders, pigs and other characters from the book.
- Take a trip to a local zoo to record behaviors of animals. Coordinate with the zoo keeper to conduct research at a location where animal movement is sure to be high. In teams of two or more, students can observe and record behavior patterns for discussion back in the classroom.
- Review various pictures of mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Have students try to make the sound that a specific animal makes or identify the correct animal picture when you make the sound.
- Have students design a four-column bulletin board, placing cut-out pictures and explanations of examples for each section: instinctive behavior, learned behavior, verbal communication and non-verbal communication.

### Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.saburchill.com/ans02/chapters/chap034c.html](http://www.saburchill.com/ans02/chapters/chap034c.html)  
The Open Door Website presents informative links to information on the hibernation habits of bats, snakes, bears and beavers.
- [www.muohio.edu/dragonfly/com/](http://www.muohio.edu/dragonfly/com/)  
This online magazine, produced in part by the National Science Teacher's Association, has great information on how wolves communicate, with links to other wolf pages.
- [www.guidedogsofamerica.org](http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org)  
The official site of Guide Dogs of America features answers to frequently asked questions on the process of training a guide dog.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Baillie, Marilyn. *Wild Talk: How Animals Talk to Each Other*. Owl Communications, Toronto, Canada; 2001.
- Kalman, Bobbie. *Why Do Animals Do That?* Crabtree Publishing, New York, NY; 1996.
- Singer, Marilyn. *Prairie Dogs Kiss and Lobsters Wave*. Henry Holt Publishing, New York, NY; 1998.
- Tatham, Betty. *How Animals Communicate*. Franklin Watts, London, UK; 2004.

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## All About Animal Behavior & Communication

Grades K-4

This guide is a supplement, designed for educators to use when presenting this program in an instructional setting.

**Before Viewing:** Research in learning suggests that it is important for the teacher to discover what the students know — or think they know — about a topic, at the start of a new unit, so that their accurate conceptions can be validated and reinforced, and their misconceptions identified and corrected. Therefore, after reviewing the pre-viewing discussion questions provided for your class, create a "Everything We Know About..." list. Preview key vocabulary words and have students raise additional questions they hope will be answered by this program. Most importantly, students should be told that as "science detectives" they must listen closely, so that after viewing the program, they will be able to tell whether or not the facts/beliefs they put on their list were scientifically accurate.

**After Viewing:** After a brief discussion about the program, challenge your "science detectives" to prove or disprove the accuracy of the facts they put on their "Everything We Know About..." list. Discuss what else they learned and use the followup questions and activities to inspire further discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and reading resources provided.



## Program Summary

All animals have to meet their basic life needs of eating, breathing, sleeping, finding shelter and mating. What an animal does to meet these needs is called behavior. An animal is born knowing how to do certain things — these actions are called instinctive behaviors. Instinct helps animals find food, mate, and raise their young. Instinctive behaviors will lead some animals to migrate or move to a better habitat. Something inside of the animal tells it how to do that kind of behavior automatically. Instead of migrating, some animals instinctively protect themselves from changes in the weather by going into a deep sleep. This behavior is called hibernation. Instinctive behavior is very important in helping animals adapt to their environment.

There are also many behaviors that animals must be taught. These are called learned behaviors. Young animals learn how to hunt, how to avoid danger and how to react to new experiences by watching and imitating older animals. Primates, like humans, apes and monkeys, are taught a great deal by their parents. Humans often train other animals how to behave in ways that are helpful to people. Through an experiment, children investigate learned behavior by attempting to train a goldfish to respond at mealtimes.

Communication is an important behavior for all animals, and animals communicate using a large variety of means. Humans can communicate through written and spoken words, as well as through non-verbal communication — body movements and expressions like smiles or frowns. Learning how to communicate with language is more important for humans than for other animals, who communicate instinctively. Other animals use sounds and movements to share information. Dogs wag their tails when they are happy, bees do a “dance” to communicate to the others in the hive, and chimpanzees screech and shake tree branches to communicate approaching danger to other chimps. Whales’ songs can be heard by others from extremely far distances. Some animals, such as dolphins and guide dogs, are able to help people with special needs because of their ability to communicate. Communication is important for most animals for many different reasons.

## Vocabulary

The following words are included for teacher reference or for use with students. They are listed in the order in which they appear in the video.

**behavior** — Any learned or instinctive action that an animal does.

**communication** — A way in which information is shared between animals. Animals communicate with sounds and gestures; humans also communicate with words.

**instinctive behavior** — Actions that animals are born knowing how to do automatically, without having to be shown how to do them.

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**learned behavior** — Actions that must be taught to animals by their parents, other animals, or through life experiences. Hunting and avoiding danger are learned behaviors for most animals.

**primate** — A group of animals that includes humans, monkeys and apes.

**grooming** — A behavior that involves cleaning oneself or others. Animals like primates groom each other by removing bugs like ticks and fleas.

**trial and error** — Finding out the best way to do something by trying different ways until something succeeds.

**hibernation** — A state of dormancy that many animals will enter in winter when the environment gets too cold, by burrowing into the ground, in water or under logs, and entering a sleep-like state until it gets warmer.

**verbal communication** — The use of words to share ideas and information with others.

**migration** — An instinctive behavior that involves traveling from one area to another in order to find food or for mating purposes.

**orca** — Also called a killer whale; a small, black-and-white whale that lives in oceans all around the world and hunts and eats other animals.

**non-verbal communication** — Sharing ideas and information without using words.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

Before students generate their list of “Everything We Know About...” this topic, stimulate and focus their thinking by raising these questions so that their list will better reflect the key ideas in this show:

1. Why do animals do what they do?
2. What are some different ways that animals communicate with each other?
3. What are instincts? Do humans have instincts?

After the class has completed their “Everything We Know About...” list, and before watching the show, ask them what other questions they have that they hope will be answered during this program. Have students listen closely to learn if everything on their class list is accurate and to hear if any of their own questions are answered.

## Focus Questions

You may wish to ask your class the following questions to assess their comprehension of key points presented in the program:

1. What are the basic survival needs that all animals have?
2. What does the term behavior mean?
3. How do animals tell each other things?
4. What is instinctive behavior? Give an example.
5. What is learned behavior? Give an example.

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6. How do beavers use their instincts to survive?
7. What kind of behavior was demonstrated in the goldfish experiment? How do you know?
8. Is hibernation instinctive or learned behavior?
9. How do orangutan orphans learn behaviors without an adult around to show them what to do?
10. Newborn tadpoles feed immediately after hatching. Is this a learned behavior? How do you know?
11. How do birds communicate?
12. What is verbal communication?
13. What is non-verbal communication? How do people communicate non-verbally?
14. How does an animal’s environment affect its behavior?
15. How do guide dogs communicate to help humans?

## Follow-up Discussion

The most important part of this segment is to examine both the facts and beliefs generated by the class in their “Everything We Know About...” list. Research indicates that students will retain their previous misconceptions — in preference to the new information — until they actively recognize and correct their own errors. Because of this, it is important to lead students to the correct ideas while identifying and correcting any misconceptions from the class list. After reviewing the list, encourage students to share the answers they got to the questions raised before viewing the program.

Raising a thought-provoking question is a good way to assess the overall depth of understanding. A couple of suggestions are listed below:

1. Discuss the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication in the animal world. Can people communicate non-verbally? Explain.
2. Brainstorm a list of possible reasons that some animals possess migration instincts, while others have hibernation instincts.
3. Do people rely more on instincts or learned behavior? Discuss the reasons for your answer.
4. The show said, “If a mother seal helps her pup too much or too long, it may not learn to survive on its own.” What does that mean?

## Follow-up Activities

- As a class, research non-verbal communication in the animal world. The physical gestures made by animals like dogs, cats and monkeys have different meanings. Show students photos of animals and explain what the gestures and facial expressions mean. Have students role-play certain animals communicating.

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