

African Cats

by Vanessa York





Genre

Expository Text



Essential Question

How can learning about animals help you respect them?

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Introduction

You can find members of the cat family all over the world.

Cats have special features that make them good hunters. They have claws. They have good eyesight. Cats have strong muscles. Their muscles help them run quickly over a short distance. They are strong climbers and jumpers.

All kinds of cats are good hunters.



Some **fascinating** cats live in Africa. It is home to lions, leopards, and cheetahs. It also has smaller cats. There are servals, caracals, and golden cats.

A ranger watches some lions sleep.



African Cat Territory



Where lions, leopards, cheetahs, servals, caracals, and golden cats live

Chapter 1

Big Cats

Lions and leopards are big African cats. Big cats behave like most other cats. However, only big cats can roar. A lion's roar can be heard about five miles away!

Lions

Lions live in groups. These groups are called prides. Females usually stay with their group for their whole lives. Young males leave the group. They may live in small groups with other males. They may take over another pride. To do this, they have to fight another male and win.

There are about 15 lions in a pride.





Lions hunt zebras and other animals.

Lions usually live on the **savannah**. A pride's **territory** can be up to 100 square miles. The males **defend** the territory from attack. The females hunt for food.


Lionesses, or female lions, hunt together. One lioness leads the hunt. She **stalks**, or creeps up on, the **prey** before she attacks. The others follow her. They do not always catch their prey. Sometimes they steal the prey that other animals have killed.

STOP AND CHECK

How do lionesses hunt?

Leopards

Leopards are the smallest of the big cats. They live in forests and near rivers. Leopards live mostly alone. They usually hunt at night. Their spots help them blend in with leaves and long grass. This makes leopards good at catching prey **unaware**.

 Leopards like to sleep in trees.



Female leopards bring up their young cubs alone. They hide their cubs for a couple of months. Then the females teach their cubs to hunt.



A leopard's spots are called rosettes.

Leopard Body Language

Body language is the way a cat “talks.” You can tell what a leopard is thinking by looking at its tail.

relaxed



stalking



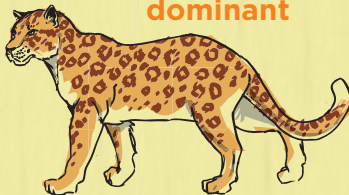
frustration



submission




dominant



Cheetahs

Cheetahs are the fastest mammals on land. They can go from 0 to 60 miles per hour in three seconds! Cheetahs have small heads. They have long legs. This helps them to run fast. Cheetahs' claws have good traction, or grip, when they run fast.

 Cheetahs drink only every two or three days.

