

Explore and discover Africa with Safari Cards

Learn about the amazing diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems that are found on the continent of Africa!

Get started!

Explore African Hall to find the plant or animal pictured on the card and then do the "Fact Quest" or "I Spy".

Fact Quest: Study the dioramas and the information labels to find out the answer to the Fact Quest challenge. Look at the answer sheet to see if you're right.

I Spy: Look carefully throughout the diorama (or sometimes elsewhere in African Hall) to find the I Spy item.



African Safari Cards

Cut out these cards along the dashed line and fold them in half along the gray dotted line, then tape or glue both sides together.



African hunting dog

Lycaon pictus

- « **Did you know?** African hunting dogs use sight rather than smell when hunting.
- « **Fact quest:** Why are these roaming dogs important on the savanna?
- « **I spy:** Shaggy, white-tipped tail. While chasing prey, hunting dogs hold their tails high like a white flag to see one another in the tall grass.



Roan antelope

Hippotragus equinus

- « **Did you know?** Predators don't often try to attack these aggressive antelope. They are strong and can use their horns with skill.
- « **Fact quest:** What other African wildlife wander the mopane woodlands where this antelope lives?
- « **I spy:** Tsetse fly. Roan antelope don't get sick from the parasite this fly transmits when it bites, but in humans it causes African sleeping sickness.



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Grevy's zebra

Equus grevyi

- « **Did you know?** A zebra's stripes are like a finger print; no two patterns are the same.
- « **Fact quest:** Why is the gerenuk antelope standing on its hind legs?
- « **I spy:** Leopard. These big cats spend most of their time in trees and have long tails used for balancing.



Hunter's hartebeest

Beatragus hunteri

- « **Did you know?** The Hunter's hartebeest is one of the most critically endangered animals in the world.
- « **Fact quest:** How many Hunter's hartebeests remain in the wild?
- « **I spy:** Steel-blue whydah. These long-tailed birds don't build nests of their own. Instead, they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds.



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Bushbuck

Tragelaphus scriptus

- « **Did you know?** Bushbucks are often found eating fallen fruit shaken from trees by baboons. They also use baboons as an alarm system to warn that a predator is close by.
- « **Fact quest:** What is another name for the Great Rift Valley?
- « **I spy:** White spots. These light markings help camouflage these antelope in the forests of Africa.



Cheetah

Acinonyx jubatus

- « **Did you know?** The cheetah's slender body, small head, long legs and flexible spine allow it to cover 6.7 m (22 ft) in a single bound.
- « **Fact quest:** Why do cheetahs quickly eat an animal they have caught?
- « **I spy:** Thomson's gazelle. The Kiswahili name for this speedy, bounding gazelle is swala tomi.



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African lion

Panthera leo

- « **Did you know?** Lions are social and live in family groups, unlike other members of the cat family. A group of lions is called a pride.
- « **Fact quest:** What is the Kiswahili name for the African lion?
- « **I spy:** Candelabra plant. A spiny, poisonous plant that grows in rocky areas of the east African savanna.



Rock hyrax

Procavia capensis

- « **Did you know?** Hyraxes are the closest living relatives to elephants and sea cows. Fossil records show that 40 million years ago one species of hyrax grew to the size of present-day cows.
- « **Fact quest:** Why is the Cape Floristic Region known as a biodiversity hotspot?
- « **I spy:** Elephants. Find them walking across the back of a different diorama on the other side of African Hall.



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African penguin

Spheniscus demersus

- « **Did you know?** Penguins have excellent blue-green, low-light vision that helps them chase schooling fish in dim ocean light.
- « **Fact quest:** How do penguin parents recognize their chicks?
- « **I spy:** Penguin wing bands. These bands help our scientists identify each penguin.



Welwitschia

Welwitschia mirabilis

- « **Did you know?** Welwitschia plants only grow in the Namib Desert. Their long, tangled leaves form an umbrella of shade at the base of the plant, creating a cooler, moister area that shelters lizards, scorpions and other small desert animals.
- « **Fact quest:** How many years can the welwitschia plant live?
- « **I spy:** Black-and-yellow-spotted firebug. These bugs like to feed on welwitschia cones.



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Baobab

Adansonia species

- « **Did you know?** These trees, which live around 500–600 years, are often called “the upside-down trees” because their branches look like roots.
- « **Fact quest:** Why are baobabs sometimes called “trees of life”?
- « **I spy:** Ring-tailed lemur. Various kinds of lemurs sip nectar from baobab flowers, spreading pollen as they do. This helps create new baobabs.



Olive baboon

Papio anubis

- « **Did you know?** Baboons communicate with each other through various sounds and body language. Typical greetings include lip-smacking, jaw-clapping, ear-flattening and sticking out their tongues.
- « **Fact quest:** Where would a baboon most likely sleep?
- « **I spy:** Scorpion. Scorpions are tasty treats for baboons which can remove the scorpions’ tails without getting stung.



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Plated lizard

Gerrhosaurus major

- « **Did you know?** Plated lizards have long, sharp claws that help them run along rocks and climb trees.
- « **Fact quest:** How has the plated lizard adapted to living in very hot and dry areas?
- « **I spy:** Pancake tortoise. These tortoises have flexible shells and bones that allow them to wedge themselves in narrow spaces between rocks to hide from predators.



King protea

Protea cynaroides

- « **Did you know?** Proteas are named after the shape-changing Greek god, Proteus, as they come in an amazing range of colors, shapes and sizes.
- « **Fact quest:** What is the name of the ancient supercontinent that Africa used to be part of?
- « **I spy:** Steinbok. This tiny gazelle is one of the six species of dwarf antelopes.



African Safari Cards

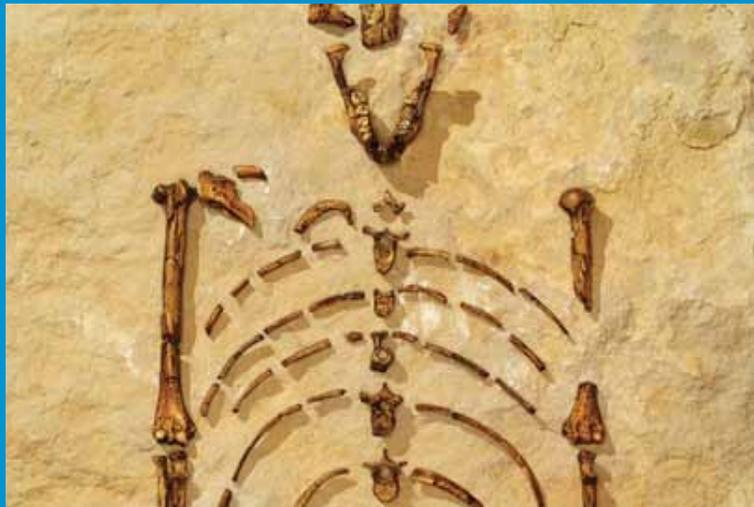
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Mountain gorilla

Gorilla beringei beringei

- « **Did you know?** Mature male gorillas, called silver backs, are about 10 times stronger than the biggest American football player.
- « **Fact quest:** How do young gorillas get around until they are three years old?
- « **I spy:** Primates. Mountain gorillas are primates, the Order that includes other apes, such as humans, and monkeys. Find another primate in African Hall.



Lucy

Australopithecus afarensis

- « **Did you know?** This is a detailed copy of Lucy's skeleton. The real Lucy is kept in a specially constructed safe in the National Museum of Ethiopia.
- « **Fact quest:** Where and when is Lucy thought to have lived?
- « **I spy:** Homo sapiens skull. Compare the size and shape of this modern skull with those of earlier ancestors.



Fact Quest Answers

African hunting dog

Why are African hunting dogs important on the savanna? They kill weak or sick animals. This helps control the number of animals (such as impala, wildebeest and zebra) found on the savannah.

Roan antelope

What other African wildlife wander the mopane woodlands where this antelope lives? The mopane woodlands is home to some of the largest and best known African animals, including the elephant and black rhino. Bird species are abundant and spectacular. Most of this area is either national park or private reserves.

Grevy's zebra

Why is the gerenuk antelope standing on its hind legs? They have long necks and stand on their hind legs so they can reach leaves high in trees instead of competing for food lower down or on the ground.

Hunter's hartebeests

How many Hunter's hartebeests remain in the wild? Less than 300. Competition for grazing land, water, habitat loss and disease are factors contributing to the hartebeests' drastic decline.

Bushbuck

What is another name for the Great Rift Valley? Cradle of Civilization. Fossils found by scientists in this area have shown that this is where the early ancestors of humans first lived.

Cheetah

Why do cheetahs quickly eat an animal they have caught? So that other animals like lions or hyenas do not steal it from them.

African lion

What is the Kiswahili name for the African Lion? Simba.

Rock hyrax

Why is the Cape Floristic Region known as a biodiversity hotspot? This region of Africa has a huge variety of plants and animals and is one of the most threatened areas on Earth due to human activity. There are over 9,000 species of plants in this region, most of which are found nowhere else in the world.

African penguin

How do penguin parents recognize their chicks? Chicks start to call while they are hatching and their parents learn to recognize their voice.

Welwitschia

How many years can the welwitschia plant live? 2,500 years.

Baobab

Why are baobabs sometimes called "trees of life"? The Malagasy people of Madagascar get many things from baobabs. They eat the seeds and make cooking oil from them. They feed the leaves to their cows. They make rope from the bark and use strips of baobab wood to make roofs for their houses.

Olive baboon

Where would a baboon most likely sleep? Baboons prefer rocky ledges instead of trees as safer sleeping spots.

Plated lizard

How has the plated lizard adapted to living in very hot and dry areas? Like other reptiles found in Africa, the plated lizard has dry, waterproof skin that holds water in. When it becomes too hot, it moves into the shade or burrows in spaces between rocks or underground to cool off.

King protea

What is the name of the ancient supercontinent that Africa used to be part of? Gondwanaland. About 200 million years ago, Gondwana land consisted of what is now Antarctica, Africa, Australia, South America and India

Mountain gorilla

How do young gorillas get around until they are three years old? Young gorillas are carried on their mother's backs until they are three years old.

Lucy

Where and when is Lucy thought to have lived? Lucy is thought to have lived in what is now Ethiopia, around 3.2 million years ago.

Vocabulary

Biodiversity:

A term that most commonly describes the number of different species that live within a particular ecosystem.

Fossil:

The preserved remains, or impression, of a plant or animal from long ago.

Kiswahili:

The language spoken by many of the people of eastern and central Africa.

Mopane:

A type of tree that is only found in Africa, which has unusual butterfly-shaped leaves.

Parasite:

An organism that grows, feeds and is sheltered on or in a different organism. It harms the organism it lives in or on and sometimes even kills it.

Predator:

Any animal that lives by catching and eating other animals.

Supercontinent:

A very large continent that split into smaller ones millions of years ago.

