



Animal Behavior (Teacher's Page)  
In Zoo Activity  
Grades: 4 – 6

**Materials:**

- Copies of behavior chart
- Clipboards
- Pencils

**Objective:** To observe and record the behaviors of Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium animals.

**At School:**

Ethology is the study of animal behavior. By studying animal behavior, we are able to better manage captive and wild populations. However, we must be careful to separate objective behaviors from subjective behaviors. Standing, climbing, vocalizing, lying, and sitting are all easily identified objective behaviors. These are behaviors that everyone would recognize and interpret the same way. Playing, fighting, and sleeping are all subjective behaviors, due to the fact that two people may see the same behavior and identify it differently. For example, consider two animals that appear to be playing. Is it possible that they may not be playing, but could actually be competing for dominance instead? Absolutely! That is why it is important that we avoid subjective behaviors when studying animals.

Review the different behaviors on the Animal Behavior Chart with the students. Notice how they are all objective behaviors, leaving little to interpretation.

**At the Zoo:**

Pass out the Animal Behavior Charts (one per group, per pair, per student – whatever works well for your class). As the students walk through the Zoo, have them observe the animals' behaviors. Record the name of the animal in the corresponding behavior box. Limit the number of animals recorded to one or two per box. Remember to have students record the time of their observations on their worksheet. This information will be used back at school.

**Back at School:**

Compile and graph all of the observed behaviors for each species. Ask the students if they think that this is a good representation of the lives of the animals they observed. Likely, it will not be. What if we studied the behaviors of a species every day for a year, would that be a good representation of their lives? Yes, much more so. That is why researchers spend so much time collecting data.

## Animal Behavior Chart (Student Worksheet)

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  <p>Lying</p>        |  <p>Standing</p>      |  <p>Sitting</p>           |  <p>Climbing</p>   |
|  <p>Walking</p>      |  <p>Running</p>       |  <p>Swimming</p>          |  <p>Grooming</p>   |
|  <p>Vocalizing</p> |  <p>Swinging</p>    |  <p>Eating</p>          |  <p>Drinking</p> |
|  <p>Hanging</p>    |  <p>Eliminating</p> |  <p>Object Handling</p> |  <p>Other</p>    |