

Design your own animal

Note: This activity requires only minimal facilitation because guidance cards are provided for visitors.

Target age range of activity:

Five–11 year olds.

Equipment required

- Copies of the three landscape sheets
- Pencils
- Colouring pencils
- Guidance cards (printed and laminated)

Preparation guidelines

- Make copies of the three landscape sheets provided (a seascape, a flat landscape with trees and a landscape with a hill)
- Landscapes can be printed onto A4 or A3 sheets, though A3 is recommended
- Print and laminate the guidance cards provided
- Lay out the landscape sheets and guidance cards, along with colouring pencils, at the exhibition
- Provide a table or other workbench for visitors to lean on when designing their animals

Description of activity

Design your own animal is an activity for five–11 year olds, designed to get them thinking about different types of characteristics and their purposes.

Visitors to the exhibition can choose from three simple landscapes upon which they will draw an animal of their own invention. The landscapes provided include a seascape, a flat landscape with trees and a landscape with a hill. Visitors can draw directly on to the sheets. Guidance cards will be available to give visitors ideas about the types of characteristics that might be helpful in different habitats.

Visitors should be encouraged to design animals with characteristics that would be beneficial to each particular habitat and which would help their animal to survive. For example, they may need to think about characteristics that will help animals reach food in high places. Visitors can take their designs home as a souvenir of the visit. Alternatively animal designs can be displayed around the exhibition.

Learning outcomes

By encouraging visitors to think about the characteristics their own animals will need, they will learn about how different phenotypes may hold evolutionary advantages to species. They will also learn that these advantages differ according to habitat and the availability of food.