





Plan and Draw an Exhibit

An animal's exhibit can contribute to its well-being while also providing a way for visitors to observe the animal from afar. Pretend you are in charge of planning an exhibit for your favorite animal at a zoo or aquarium. Try to balance your animal's needs with the visitors' needs. This activity requires access to the Internet or a library.

MATERIALS

-  Pen or pencil and paper
-  White poster board or sheet of paper (any size)
-  Ruler
-  Markers, crayons, colored pencils, or paint

Choose an animal for which you'd like to design an exhibit. Research your animal online or at a library. If you decide to research online, a good place to start is www.nationalgeographic.com/animals.

Write down as much as you can about your animal. Answer the following questions: Where does this animal live in the wild? What is the climate like in its natural habitat? What does this animal need to survive? How does it spend its day? What else is interesting or unique about how this animal lives in the wild?

Use the knowledge you've gained to begin planning an exhibit. On a poster board or piece of paper, draw a floor made of grass, dirt, or whatever material you'd find on the ground in your animal's natural habitat. Add some "furniture" such as rocks, plants, and trees. This could also

include hollowed-out logs, a pond, or a small cave. If you'd like, label these items on your drawing.

Before you move on, make sure you've created an exhibit that meets your animal's needs. Does your animal need shade? If so, give it some tall trees or a cliff with an overhang. Should you include a heat pad, heat lamp, or heated rock for the winter months? Does your animal need a fresh water source such as a waterfall or a stream?

Decide how the exhibit will separate your animal from zoo visitors. You can use a fence with metal mesh, thick glass, or natural barriers such as a ditch or a moat. If you choose a ditch or a moat, indicate where it will go on your drawing. If you decide on a fence or glass, draw it in using a ruler and label it "fence" or "viewing glass."

If you are designing an aquatic habitat, be sure to include an area where visitors can look through the glass into the exhibit. Label this area "underwater viewing." Once you feel confident in your design, decorate it by coloring or painting the landscape.

Extra Credit

Take your design up a notch by adding some depth. Glue small rocks on your poster board to represent boulders, paint some cotton balls green to look like shrubs, or use blue construction paper to add a pool or a stream. Be creative with your materials to make your exhibit design look as real as possible.