

Mammals, Habitats and Offspring

Instructions: Read the text about mammals and their offspring. Look for the science vocabulary in bold. Then answer the questions.

Mammals, Habitats and Offspring

Mammals are animals with **backbones** and they are usually covered with hair or fur. Most mammals give **live birth** and mothers feed their babies with **milk**. A baby animal is called **offspring**. Mammal offspring often need lots of care because they are born small and cannot look after themselves straight away.

There are different types of mammals. Many are **placental mammals**, which means the baby grows inside the mother's body for a longer time before being born (for example, humans, elephants, and dolphins). Some mammals are **marsupials**, like kangaroos, whose young are born very early and continue growing in a pouch. A small group of mammals called **monotremes** lay eggs (for example, the platypus). Even though they are different, all mammals feed their young with milk.

Habitats and keeping offspring safe

Every mammal lives in a **habitat**—the place where it finds food, water, shelter, and space. A habitat can make raising offspring easier or harder. In cold habitats, babies must stay warm and dry. In very dry habitats, families must find water. In

Mammal parent and offspring



habitats with many **predators**, adults must keep offspring hidden and safe.

Habitats can change through the year. If food is scarce, it may be harder for a parent to produce milk and feed growing young. Some mammals protect a **territory** to keep their young away from danger and to make sure there is enough food nearby.

To cope with difficult conditions, mammals use survival strategies. Some mammals **migrate** when food is scarce. Others **hibernate** to save energy during winter. Many mammals use **camouflage** or stay very still so predators do not notice their young. Timing also matters: some mammals have babies when food is easier to find.

Polar bear (Arctic habitat)

Polar bears live in a very cold habitat. A mother bear often uses a sheltered den to keep her **cub** warm. The cub stays close to its mother for heat and protection while it grows stronger and learns to move on ice.

Kangaroo (Grassland habitat)

Kangaroos are **marsupials**. Their offspring, called a **joey**, is born very tiny and continues growing safely inside the mother's pouch. This helps protect the joey from weather and predators while it develops.

Habitat & offspring



Polar bear and cub



Kangaroo and joey



Bat (Woodland or cave habitat)

Many bats rest in caves, trees, or buildings. Bat pups cling to their mother while she rests. Because many bats are **nocturnal**, mothers often feed at night and return to keep their pups safe.

Bat & pup



Dolphin (Ocean habitat)

Dolphins live in saltwater habitats. A baby dolphin is called a **calf**. Calves stay close to their mother to learn how to swim, find food, and come to the surface to breathe. Living in a group can also help protect young dolphins.

Dolphin and calf



Seal (Coastal habitat)

Seals spend time in the sea and on land. A baby seal is a **pup**. Pups need a safe beach or rocky shore to rest. The mother returns to feed the pup with rich milk until it is strong enough to swim and hunt.

Seal and pup



Red fox (Woodland habitat)

Red foxes often use a hidden den. Fox offspring are called **cubs**. The parents bring food back to the den and keep the cubs safe while they learn to explore, hunt, and avoid predators.

Red fox and cubs



Orangutan (Rainforest habitat)

Orangutans live in rainforest habitats. Their offspring stay with their mother for a long time because it takes years to learn which foods to eat and how to move safely through trees. Long-lasting parental care helps the young survive in a complex habitat.

Orangutan mother and baby



Elephant (Savanna habitat)

Elephants often live in herds. A baby elephant is a **calf**. Living in a group can help keep calves safe because several adults may watch over the young. Calves learn where to find water and food by staying close to experienced adults.

As young mammals grow, they may be **weaned**, which means they stop drinking milk and start eating other food. The stages an animal goes through as it grows are part of its **life cycle**.

Elephant herd and calf



Glossary

Word	Meaning
Mammal	A type of animal with a backbone; most have fur or hair, give live birth, and feed their young with milk.
Offspring	A baby or young animal.
Habitat	The natural home of an animal (where it finds food, water, shelter, and space).
Live birth	When a baby is born alive (not hatched from an egg).
Milk	A nutritious drink made by mammal mothers to feed their young.
Placental mammal	A mammal whose baby grows inside the mother's body for a longer time before being born.
Marsupial	A mammal whose young are born very early and continue growing in a pouch (for example, a kangaroo).
Monotreme	A mammal that lays eggs (for example, the platypus).
Predator	An animal that hunts other animals for food.
Adaptation	A feature or behaviour that helps a living thing survive in its habitat.
Nocturnal	Active at night and resting during the day.
Migrate	To move from one place to another at certain times of year.
Hibernate	To sleep for a long time to save energy, usually during winter.
Camouflage	Colours or patterns that help an animal blend in with its surroundings.

Territory	An area an animal protects to keep it safe and to make sure there is enough food.
Parental care	When parents look after their offspring by feeding, protecting, and teaching them.
Weaned	When a young mammal stops drinking milk and starts eating other food.
Life cycle	The stages an animal goes through as it grows (baby, young, adult).
Cub / Calf / Pup / Joey	Different names for mammal offspring (for example, bear cub, dolphin calf, seal pup, kangaroo joey).



Questions

1. Find and copy one word from the text that means a baby or young animal.

2. List two features that help identify an animal as a mammal.

3. Using the text, explain what a habitat is and name two things an animal needs there.

4. How does a difficult habitat affect the way a parent cares for its offspring? Use one example from the text to support your answer.

5. What does the word **predator** mean in this text?

6. Choose one animal from the text and explain how the parent helps the young survive. Include evidence from the text.

7. What does **nocturnal** mean, and which animal in the text is described this way?

8. How can living in a group help mammal offspring survive? Use information from the dolphin or elephant section.

9. Compare a placental mammal and a marsupial. What is one difference in how their young develop?

10. What do **migrate** and **hibernate** mean? Explain how each can help mammals survive.

11. Why might a mammal protect a **territory** when it has young? Explain using the text.

12. What does it mean for a young mammal to be **weaned**, and where does this fit in its life cycle?

13. Choose two offspring names from the text (for example, cub, calf, pup, joey) and match each one to the correct animal.

Answer Key

1. Offspring.
2. Any two: mammals have backbones; they usually have hair or fur; most give live birth; mothers feed their young with milk.
3. A habitat is the place where an animal lives and finds what it needs to survive. It needs things such as food, water, shelter, and space.
4. A difficult habitat can make it harder for parents to keep offspring safe, warm, fed, or hidden. For example, in the Arctic a polar bear mother uses a sheltered den to keep her cub warm and protected.
5. A predator is an animal that hunts other animals for food.
6. Example answer: A kangaroo parent helps its joey survive by keeping it safe inside the pouch while it continues to grow. The text says this protects the joey from weather and predators.
7. Nocturnal means active at night and resting during the day. The bat is described as nocturnal.
8. Living in a group can help offspring survive because more adults can help protect them. In the dolphin or elephant section, the text explains that groups can keep young safer while they learn important survival skills.

9. A placental mammal keeps its baby growing inside the mother's body for longer before birth. A marsupial has very tiny young that continue developing in a pouch after birth.
10. Migrate means to move from one place to another at certain times of year, which can help mammals find food or better conditions. Hibernate means to sleep for a long time to save energy, which helps mammals survive when winter conditions are difficult.
11. A mammal may protect a territory to keep its young safe and to make sure there is enough food nearby. This can also help keep dangers and other animals away from the offspring.
12. Being weaned means a young mammal stops drinking milk and begins eating other food. This happens as it grows from a baby into the next stage of its life cycle.
13. Any two correct matches, for example: cub - polar bear or red fox; calf - dolphin or elephant; pup - seal or bat; joey - kangaroo.