



The Giraffe — A Giant of the African Savanna

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

The giraffe is the tallest living **mammal** on Earth, with adult males reaching heights of up to 5.5 meters. This remarkable animal belongs to the **species** *Giraffa camelopardalis* and is found across the open savannas and woodlands of sub-Saharan Africa. Giraffes are instantly recognizable by the **pattern** of large brown patches covering their skin — a marking unique to each individual, much like a human fingerprint.

Giraffes are superbly **adapted** to life in their African habitat. Their long necks — which can reach up to 2 meters in length — allow them to feed on the leaves of acacia and other tall trees, a food source that most other animals cannot reach. A giraffe's tongue stretches up to 45 centimeters and is tough and dark enough to grip thorny branches without injury. These physical advantages give giraffes access to a rich food supply while reducing direct **competition** with other grazing animals.

One of the greatest daily challenges for a giraffe is simply drinking water. Because of its great height, a giraffe must awkwardly spread or bend its front legs to lower its head to the surface. During this vulnerable moment, giraffes face serious risk from **predators** such as lions and crocodiles. As a result, giraffes typically drink quickly and in groups, staying alert to any movement around them.

Giraffes are social animals that live in loose, flexible groups called towers. Unlike many herd animals, a tower has no fixed membership — giraffes freely join or leave different groups. They **communicate** with each other mainly through body language, using neck movements and posture to share information. Male giraffes, known as bulls, also **compete** for **territory** and mating rights by swinging their long necks at each other in a behavior called "necking."

Despite their size, giraffes face growing pressures today. Habitat loss, illegal hunting, and human conflict have reduced wild giraffe **populations** by more than 40% over the last 30 years. Two giraffe **species** are now classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN. Without stronger conservation efforts and the protection of wild African landscapes, these gentle giants may lose the space and resources they need to **survive** for future generations.

A. Vocabulary

1. mammal _____

a. an animal that hunts and kills other animals for food

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| 2. species ____ | b. an area of land that an animal defends against others |
| 3. pattern ____ | c. a group of similar living things that can reproduce with each other |
| 4. adapt ____ | d. the total number of animals or people living in a particular area |
| 5. predator ____ | e. to continue to live or exist despite danger or difficult conditions |
| 6. communicate ____ | f. to share information or feelings with others using language or signals |
| 7. compete ____ | g. to try to win or achieve something that others are also trying to get |
| 8. territory ____ | h. a warm-blooded animal that breathes air and nurses its young with milk |
| 9. population ____ | i. a repeated arrangement of shapes, colors, or marks on a surface |
| 10. survive ____ | j. to change in order to suit a new environment or situation |



B. True or False

1. The giraffe is the tallest living mammal on Earth. ____
2. All giraffes have the same pattern of spots on their skin. ____
3. A giraffe's tongue can stretch up to 45 centimeters. ____
4. Giraffes can easily lower their heads to drink water without any difficulty. ____
5. Giraffes are most at risk from predators while they are drinking. ____
6. A group of giraffes living together is called a pride. ____
7. Male giraffes swing their long necks at each other to compete for territory. ____
8. Giraffe populations have grown by 40% over the last 30 years. ____
9. Some giraffe species are now classified as Critically Endangered. ____



C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: adapt, predator, population, communicate, territory

1. Giraffes are well _____ ed to life in the African savanna, feeding on leaves that other animals cannot reach.
2. Lions and crocodiles are dangerous _____ s that can attack giraffes while they are drinking.
3. Wild giraffe _____ s have declined by more than 40% over the last 30 years.
4. Giraffes _____ with each other mainly through body language, using neck movements and posture.
5. Male giraffes swing their long necks at each other to compete for _____ and mating rights.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. What makes giraffes instantly recognizable, and where do they live?
2. How are giraffes physically adapted to feed on acacia trees?
3. Why is drinking water a dangerous activity for giraffes, and how do they manage the risk?
4. How do giraffes live in social groups, and how do males compete for dominance?
5. What are the main threats to giraffes today, and why is conservation urgent?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Giraffe populations have fallen by over 40% in just 30 years. Who do you think should be responsible for reversing this — local communities, national governments, or international organizations? Why?
2. Male giraffes use necking — swinging their long necks like weapons — to compete for mates. What does this tell us about how animals can evolve to use their bodies in unexpected ways?
3. If you could create one new law to protect giraffes and their habitats, what would it say, and how would you make sure it was followed?



Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-h, 2-c, 3-i, 4-j, 5-a, 6-f, 7-g, 8-b, 9-d, 10-e

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-adapt, 2-predator, 3-population, 4-communicate, 5-territory

D. Comprehension:

1. Giraffes are recognized by their unique pattern of large brown patches and extremely long necks. They live across the savannas and woodlands of sub-Saharan Africa.
2. A giraffe's long neck (up to 2 meters) allows it to reach acacia leaves that other animals cannot access. Its 45-centimeter tongue is tough and dark enough to grip thorny branches without injury.
3. To drink, a giraffe must spread or bend its front legs to lower its head to the water, making it vulnerable to predators. Giraffes manage this risk by drinking quickly and in groups while staying alert.
4. Giraffes live in loose groups called towers with no fixed membership. Males compete for territory and mating rights by swinging their necks at each other in a behavior called necking. Giraffes communicate mainly through body language.
5. Habitat loss, illegal hunting, and human conflict have reduced giraffe populations by over 40% in 30 years. Two species are now Critically Endangered. Strong conservation action and protection of wild landscapes are urgently needed.

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