



Lions — Social

Predators of the African Savanna

Reading Worksheet — Level F | [tahricteaches.com](https://www.tahricteaches.com)

The lion is Africa's most powerful **predator** and one of the most recognized animals on Earth. Unlike most big cats, which hunt alone, lions are deeply social **mammals** that depend on group cooperation for survival. They inhabit open grasslands and savannas — a **habitat** perfectly suited to cooperative hunting. Once roaming across Africa and parts of Europe and Asia, wild lion populations have declined sharply over the past century due to hunting and land loss.

Lions live in family groups called **prides**, typically consisting of 5 to 30 individuals. A pride usually includes related females, their cubs, and one to four **dominant** males who guard the group. Dominant males hold their position for roughly two to three years before being challenged by younger rivals. Within the pride, females form the **bonds** that hold the group together — nursing cubs jointly, sharing food, and cooperating across generations.

Lionesses are the pride's primary hunters, and they **cooperate** with remarkable coordination. Using terrain and wind direction, a hunting group spreads out to surround their **prey** before closing in. Common targets include zebra, wildebeest, and buffalo — large animals that a single lion could rarely take alone. Lions hunt mostly at night or during cooler dawn hours. Despite short bursts of speed reaching 80 kilometers per hour, hunt success rates are only around 20 to 30 percent.

Each pride defends a defined **territory** that can extend from 20 to over 400 square kilometers, depending on **prey** availability. The territory is marked with scent, claw marks on trees, and roaring that can carry up to 8 kilometers across open grassland. When rival lions intrude, **dominant** males respond aggressively. Territories shift seasonally as prey moves, and lions must often **survive** without a kill for days during dry periods when prey populations thin.

Wild lions are now classified as vulnerable, with fewer than 25,000 remaining outside protected reserves. Their decline is driven by **habitat** loss, conflict with farming communities, and collapsing **prey** populations. As the apex **predator** of the savanna, lions regulate herbivore numbers and shape plant communities — their absence triggers wide ecological collapse. Conservation programs protecting wildlife corridors and reducing human-wildlife conflict are showing early promise. The lion does not merely **survive** within nature; it actively maintains the balance of an entire ecosystem.

A. Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. predator ____ | a. to continue to live, especially in difficult or dangerous conditions |
| 2. mammal ____ | b. an animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal |
| 3. habitat ____ | c. to work together with others toward a shared goal |
| 4. pride ____ | d. a family group of lions living and hunting together |
| 5. dominant ____ | e. an area of land that an animal or group defends as its own |
| 6. bond ____ | f. an animal that hunts and kills other animals for food |
| 7. cooperate ____ | g. a warm-blooded animal that breathes air and feeds milk to its young |
| 8. prey ____ | h. the natural environment where an animal normally lives |
| 9. territory ____ | i. most powerful or important in a group; in control |
| 10. survive ____ | j. a strong connection or relationship between animals or people |



B. True or False

1. Most big cats, like lions, prefer to live and hunt in large groups. ____
2. A lion pride typically consists of 5 to 30 individuals. ____
3. Dominant male lions usually hold their position for over ten years. ____
4. Lionesses are the pride's primary hunters. ____
5. Lions are most successful when they hunt during the middle of the day. ____
6. A lion's roar can travel up to 8 kilometers in open grassland. ____
7. Wild lion populations are currently growing in most parts of Africa. ____
8. Lions use scent, claw marks, and roaring to defend their territory. ____
9. Conservation efforts to protect wildlife corridors are showing early promise. ____



C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: predator, pride, cooperate, territory, survive

1. The lion is Africa's most powerful _____, sitting at the top of the food chain.
2. Lions live in family groups called _____s, made up of related females, cubs, and dominant males.
3. Lionesses _____ with remarkable coordination, using terrain and wind to surround their prey.
4. Each lion pride defends a defined _____ marked with scent, claw marks, and roaring.
5. Lions must often _____ without a kill for days during dry periods when prey populations thin.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. How are lions different from most other big cats, and what type of habitat do they prefer?
2. Describe the social structure of a lion pride, including the roles of dominant males and females.
3. How do lionesses hunt cooperatively, and what are their typical success rates?
4. How do lions mark and defend their territory?
5. What threats are wild lions currently facing, and what conservation efforts are being made?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Lions hunt cooperatively with success rates of only 20–30%. Do you think teamwork is always more effective than individual effort? Give examples from human life to support your view.
2. Wild lion populations have dropped to fewer than 25,000 outside protected areas. What do you think would happen to the African savanna ecosystem if lions disappeared completely?
3. Some conservationists argue that protecting large predators like lions is the most cost-effective way to conserve entire ecosystems. Do you agree with this approach, or should conservation focus on other priorities?



Answer Key

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

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

C. Fill Blanks: 1-predator, 2-pride, 3-cooperate, 4-territory, 5-survive

D. Comprehension:

1. Unlike most big cats that hunt alone, lions are social mammals that live and hunt in groups. They prefer open grasslands and savannas, a habitat suited to cooperative hunting across wide areas.
2. A pride of 5–30 lions is led by 1–4 dominant males who guard the group and hold their position for about two to three years. Females form the core of the pride, nursing cubs jointly, sharing food, and maintaining the social bonds across generations.
3. Lionesses spread out using terrain and wind direction to surround prey, then close in together. They target large animals like zebra and buffalo that a single lion could not take alone. Despite their speed, success rates are only around 20–30 percent.
4. Lions mark their territory with scent glands, claw marks on trees, and loud roaring that carries up to 8 kilometers. Dominant males respond aggressively when rivals enter the territory. Boundaries shift seasonally as prey migrates.
5. Wild lions face habitat loss, conflict with farming communities, and declining prey populations. Fewer than 25,000 remain outside protected reserves. Conservation programs focusing on wildlife corridors and reducing human-wildlife conflict are showing early promise.

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