



Teacher Edition

AlphaWorld

Animals of the African Grasslands

Written by James Talia



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Published edition
© Eleanor Curtain
Publishing 2005
Text © Nicole di Marco
Photographs © Eleanor
Curtain Publishing

First published 2005

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Alexander Stitt
Production by
Publishing Solutions

Printed in China

ISBN 0 7253 3129 1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
05 06 07

How to use this book

The AlphaWorld teacher editions support teachers as they guide children's reading and thinking during one or more guided reading sessions. Teachers can observe children as they read and choose from the given suggestions to suit individual needs.

Before reading

Setting the context, front cover and title page:

The suggestions help teachers to set the scene and prepare children for reading the book. Prompts help to determine children's prior knowledge. Where necessary, background information is provided. Teachers are encouraged to check that children understand the vocabulary listed and to discuss the meanings and/or the structures of these words. Previous experiences with similar text types may also be discussed.

During reading

Predict, Read, Reflect:

Questions encourage children to engage with the text by making predictions. The children then read a section of the text and reflect on what they have read. The focus is on the content, language and text features of the book.

Observe and support:

Prompts help teachers to focus on the strategies children use as they read. Teachers can then select from and adapt the suggestions according to the needs of the individual child. The suggestions aim to develop a child's reading abilities. Interruptions to the child's reading should be minimal.

After reading

A selection of reading and writing activities:

The last pages of the teacher edition provide follow-up activities and include the assessment focus.

Selected text features

- Contents page
- Introduction and conclusion
- Colour photographs with labels support the text

Vocabulary

Africa, African hunting dogs, antelope, browsers, buffalo, cheetah, coarse, gazelles, grasslands, grazers, herds, hyenas, kudu, leopards, meat-eaters, plant-eaters, predators, prey, pride, scavengers, secretary birds, vultures, warning, warthogs, wildebeest

Setting the context

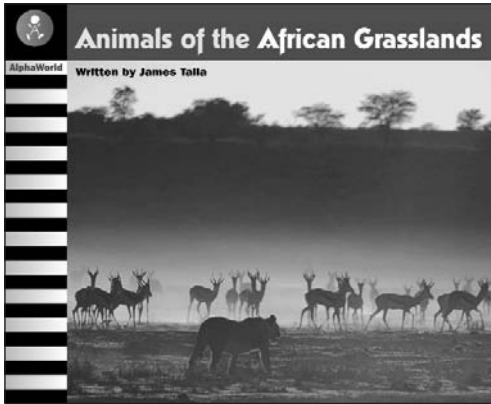
Discuss visits to the zoo and the African animals the children have seen there.

Do you like going to the zoo? What animals do you like to visit? Which of these animals would be African animals?

Record their responses on cards.

Background information

This book explains how different animals are able to survive together in the productive grasslands of Africa. The book deals with the large herbivores that eat most kinds of plants growing on the grasslands. It also explains how large predators and scavengers feed on grassland animals. Living in herds and mixing with other species are examples of cooperative behaviour that help some species survive.

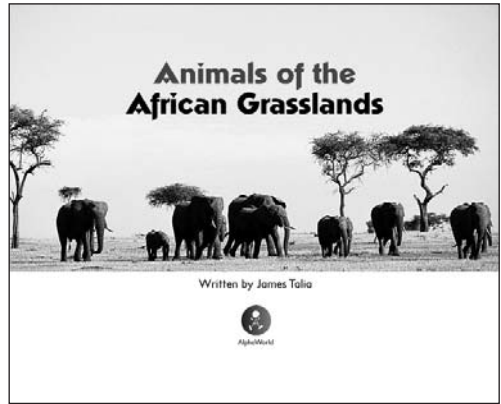


Front cover

Show the front cover.

This book is called Animals of the African Grasslands.

What animals can you see on the front cover? What do you think is happening in the cover photo?



Title page

Turn to the title page.


What can you see in this photo? Does it help you to guess what the book is about?

Read the title and author together.

Point out that no photographer is acknowledged because photographs from various sources have been used.

Predict

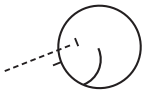
This is the contents page. Let's read it through together to find out what sort of information will be in the book.
Discuss any of the words that the children have difficulty with.

 **Read** to the end of page 3.

Reflect

Discuss what the children think 'plant-eaters' and 'meat-eaters' mean. Sort the animal names written on cards previously into those two categories. Get them to justify their choice.

Why do you think this animal is a meat-eater? Why do you think this animal is a plant-eater?



Observe and support

Can the child identify where to find information by reading the contents page?

Where will I find information about plant-eaters? What will I read about on page 24?



Contents

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Predict

This is the introduction. This introduction says that grasslands cover large parts of Africa.

Point out the map of Africa and the amount of grasslands shaded.

Look at the photos on this page. What do you think grasslands are like? What types of animals will call the grasslands their home?

Turn to page 6.

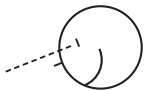
The next chapter is about plant-eaters. This page says that the grasslands of Africa feed millions of animals. How would there be enough food for all the different types of animals? How would they share the plants?

Read to the end of page 7.

Reflect

Tell me in your own words something that you discovered about animals that live on the African grasslands?

How do the many types of plant-eaters share the plants?



Observe and support

Does the child check what she or he read with the phonic information on the page?

How did you know that word was ‘antelope’? What did you check at the start of the word? What did you look for at the end of the word? What else did you check?

Introduction

Grasslands cover large parts of Africa. In grasslands there is not enough rain for many tall trees to grow, but many kinds of grasses, bushes and small trees grow there. The summers are warm and most of the rain falls in the cool winters.

Huge herds of animals eat the plants that grow on the grasslands. Fast-running predators hunt the animals that eat the plants.



Grasslands



Cheetah



Zebra



Wildebeest



Giraffe



Zebra

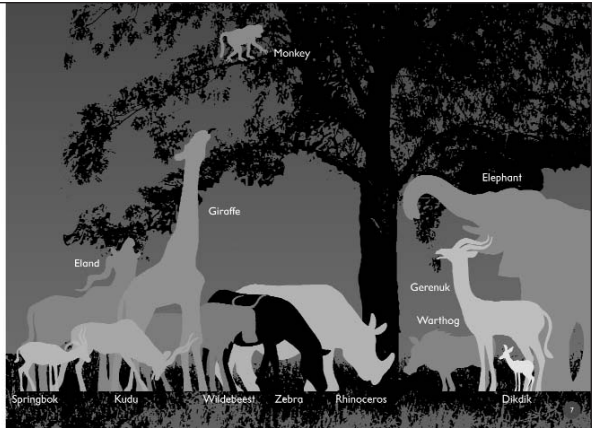
Plant-eaters

The grasslands of Africa feed millions of animals. Huge herds of zebra, buffalo, wildebeest and other antelope eat the grasses. These great herds travel between different grasslands. Plant-eating animals move across the grasslands eating the plants that grow after the rains fall.

The many different plant-eaters share the plants. Each type of animal eats only some kinds of grasses, bushes or trees. Different parts of the plants are eaten by different kinds of animals. Some animals eat close to the ground and other animals eat high in the tree-tops.



Buffalo



Monkey

Elephant

Giraffe

Eland

Gerenuk

Warthog

Springbok

Kudu

Wildebeest

Zebra

Rhinoceros

Dikdik

Predict

Plant-eaters that eat grass are called grazers. All parts of the grasses are grazed by different animals. What would be the different parts of the grasses?

Gazelles eat the new shoots of different grasses. Warthogs dig in the ground with their feet, tusks and mouths. What part of the grasses do you think they eat?

Turn to page 10.

Large animals that eat the leaves and stems of bushes and trees are called browsers.

Look at the photos on this page. What do you think kudu, giraffes and elephants eat?

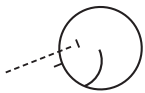
Read to the end of page 11.

Reflect

What does 'graze' mean?

What part of the grasses do gazelles, warthogs, wildebeest and buffalo eat?

Do elephants and giraffes browse on the same part of the trees? How do you know?



Observe and support

Ask a child to read aloud to you while the other children are reading silently.

Can the child read the text fluently?

Try to make it sound as if you were talking to someone.

Plant-eaters

Grazers

Animals that eat grass are called grazers. All parts of the grasses are eaten or grazed by different animals.

Gazelles eat the new shoots of different grasses. They eat the shoots that are very close to the ground. Gazelles have long, muscular legs and can travel long distances to find their food.

Warthogs dig in the ground for the roots of grasses. They use their feet, tusks and mouths to dig out shallow roots from the ground.



Wildebeest eat the leafy centres of grasses. They live in huge herds and must travel great distances to find enough food during the dry season.

Buffalo also travel in large herds. They eat the coarse tops of grasses. They graze on the tall grasses that grow after heavy rains.

10

Plant-eaters

Browsers

Large animals that eat the leaves and stems of bushes are called browsers.

Kudu browse on shrubs and lower branches of trees. They like to eat the pods that grow on wattle trees.

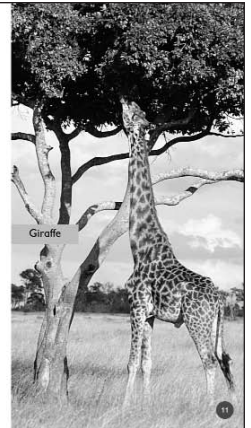
Kudu can hide behind these plants as they eat them.



Giraffes feed on the top part of trees. They have long legs and necks and can reach higher than any other plant-eater.

They use their thick lips and long tongues to reach around the thorns and eat the leaves of wattle trees.

Elephants feed on the trees. They use their trunks to reach the higher leaves and bark of the taller trees.



11

Predict

Meat-eating animals eat plant-eating animals. These meat-eaters are either predators or scavengers. What do you think a predator does? What do you think a scavenger does?

Turn to page 14.

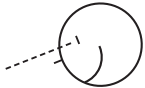
This section is about predators. When leopards hunt they hide in bushes and tall grass to watch their prey. Leopards are very powerful and carry their prey into trees so other predators cannot reach them.

Look at the photos of the cheetah. How do you think they catch their prey?

Read to the end of page 15.

Reflect

Do predators and scavengers hunt for food in the same way? Are they in competition with each other? How do you know? What is special about the cheetah? Why can it run so fast?



Observe and support

Can the child explain the meaning of the scientific language used in the book?

What do you think prey means?

What is the difference between a predator and a scavenger?

Meat-eaters

On the grasslands of Africa, meat-eating animals eat plant-eating animals. These meat-eating animals are either predators or scavengers.

A predator is an animal that kills its prey and eats it.
A scavenger eats any dead animals it can find.

Predators and scavengers compete with each other for food. They hunt for food in different ways.



10



11

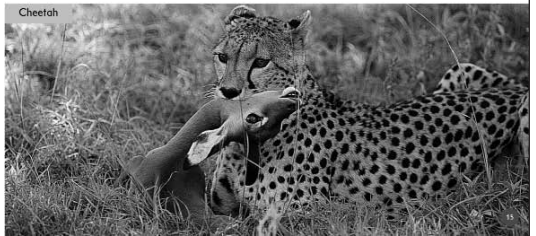
Meat-eaters Predators

When leopards hunt they hide in bushes and tall grass and watch their prey. They catch their prey after a short chase. Then they use their powerful bodies to carry the prey into trees where other predators cannot reach them.



Cheetahs are the fastest land animals over short distances. If they can get close enough for a short sprint, they can catch most animals.

Their long legs, flexible backs, wide nostrils and big lungs help them reach top speed very quickly.



Predict

Discuss the heading and subheading on this page.

Look at the photo of the lion. Lions often hunt in a small group called a pride. The pride shares the kill. Look at the photo of the African hunting dogs. Do you think they hunt in groups as well? Why?

Turn to page 18.

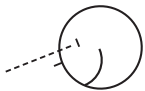
This section is about scavengers. Scavengers feed on anything they find on the grasslands. Look at the photos of the vultures. What can you see? How would they find their food? Hyenas have the most powerful jaws of all the scavengers. What would they use them for?

Read to the end of page 19.

Reflect

Tell me in your own words how African hunting dogs hunt for food?

Tell me something interesting you discovered about scavengers?



Observe and support

Can the child interpret the text?

Why do some predators, like the lion and the African hunting dog, hunt their prey in groups?

Meat-eaters Predators

Lions are very powerful predators. They are strong enough to bring down large animals such as buffalo or zebras. Their powerful jaws and sharp teeth can bite through large bones. Lions often hunt in a small group called a pride. They work together to chase prey towards a lion hiding in the grass who catches it and brings it to the ground. The pride shares the kill.



African hunting dogs hunt in groups of 10 to 15 animals. They chase their prey over great distances until the animal becomes tired. The dogs can bring down large prey with their powerful teeth and jaws. The group shares the kill.

Meat-eaters Scavengers

Scavengers feed on anything left by predators, or on sick or dead animals they find on the grasslands.

Vultures and secretary birds are scavengers. They fly over the grasslands, searching for food with their keen eyes. Their powerful beaks can tear food from the body of a dead animal.



Hyenas have the most powerful jaws of all the meat-eating animals. They use their jaws and teeth to crack large animal bones that have been left by predators. They eat almost every part of the animal. Hyenas sometimes hunt and kill animals themselves.

Predict


Discuss the heading and subheading on this page.

Most large plant-eating animals live in big groups called herds. Why do you think these animals live and travel in a herd?

Look at the photo of the wildebeest and zebra. Why would different types of animals travel together?

Turn to page 22.

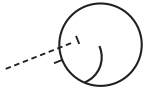
Look at the photo of the gazelle. What do you notice about its eyes? Why would big eyes on the side of their head help them keep safe from predators?

 **Read** to the end of page 23.

Reflect

Why is it safer to live and travel in a herd? Why do different animal herds travel together?

How do plant-eaters keep themselves safe from predators while they are feeding?



Observe and support

Can the child explain the use of headings and subheadings in the text?

Why does the author use headings and subheadings?

What is their purpose?

Surviving in the grasslands

Living in herds

On the grasslands of Africa, most large plant-eating animals live in big groups called herds.

It is much safer for these animals to live and travel in a herd than to be alone. The predators that hunt them find it difficult to choose which animal to hunt when they see a large group. The stronger members of the herd try to shelter or hide the younger animals from predators. Sometimes buffalo will drive away a lion that tries to attack a member of the herd.



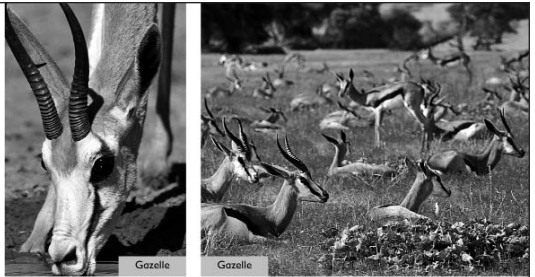
Some types of animals usually travel with another type of animal that is taller and can see further, or has a better sense of smell. All types of animals listen and watch for warnings about predators. These can come from animals in their own herd or from other animals.



Surviving in the grasslands

Watching for predators

Most plant-eaters have big eyes on the sides of their heads. They can see to the front, to the sides and even behind. They can see over long distances and must always watch for predators that hunt them for food.



Plant-eaters spend most of their time feeding. They eat and drink by lowering their heads. When they do this they cannot see predators. In a large herd, animals take turns to watch for danger while others feed and drink.

Predict

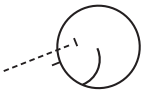
This is the conclusion. It tells us that most of the animals of the African grasslands are plant-eaters. It also says that they eat different parts of nearly every kind of plant on the grasslands. What do you think it will say about meat-eaters?

Read to the end of page 24.

Reflect

Are there more plant-eaters or meat-eaters? How do you know?

Tell me something you have learned about animals of the African grasslands.



Observe and support

Can the child interpret what the author might mean?
Why do all grassland animals depend on plants for food?

Conclusion

Most of the animals of the African grasslands are plant-eaters. Different plant-eaters eat different parts of nearly every kind of plant on the grasslands.

Some of the animals on the grasslands are predators. They catch and eat their prey in different ways.

Other grassland animals are scavengers. They find and eat the bodies of animals that have died or been killed by predators.

All grassland animals depend on plants for food.



After reading

Being a meaning maker

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions:

What is a plant-eater?

How do plant-eaters work together to survive?

What is a meat-eater?

What is the difference between predators and scavengers?

Why do all the animals that live on the African grasslands depend on plants to survive?

Being a code breaker

Explore the following language features:

- Adjectives: big, coarse, flexible, great, long, powerful, short, tall, thick, top, wide
- Plurals: animals, buffalo, cheetahs, elephants, grasslands, gazelles, kudu, leaves, leopards, shrubs, stems, trees, wildebeest, warthogs

Being a text user

Refer back to the meat-eater/plant-eater sort that children did after discussing the contents page. Invite children to change and add information.

Are there other African animals we have discovered from reading this book? Are they meat-eaters or plant-eaters?


Do we need to make changes to our original animal sort? Why?


Being a text critic

Tell me about the information in the story that you were most interested in?

Was there anything about this book that helped you to understand the information better? What was it?


Responding to text

 The children could complete an information retrieval chart based on the book. Retrieval charts help to categorise information and provide a visual summary of the text. The retrieval chart for this book could look like the one below.

 The children could complete a picture facts activity. Have the children re-read the conclusion together and draw a picture to represent each piece of information found in it. The children could draw plants, a giraffe eating branches, a warthog eating roots, a cheetah running after its prey and a vulture eating a dead zebra.

Animals of the African Grasslands by
James Talia

Animal	Movement	Food	Meat/ plant eaters?	What type of meat-eater/ plant-eater?
Gazelles	Long muscular legs Can travel long distances	New shoots of different plants	Plant-eater	Grazer
Vulture	Fly over the grasslands	Dead animals	Meat-eater	Scavenger

 Discuss what the children believe an adjective to be. The children could work in pairs to find and highlight the adjectives on a photocopied page of the book. Have the children share and justify their choices with the class.
What type of words are adjectives?
What do adjectives do to a sentence?

Writing links


Look at an enlarged photo of an African animal. Discuss its features and generate a list of adjectives to describe it. Then model writing an interesting sentence about this animal using as many adjectives as you can.

Provide pictures of African animals. The children could select one and write their own sentences describing the unique features of that animal. Display the sentences with the picture.


Possible assessment focus

Can the children:

- explain the meaning of the scientific language used in the book?
- provide examples of plant-eaters and meat-eaters?
- identify adjectives used in the text?

 whole text activity

 sentence activity

 word activity

Animals of the African Grasslands

Topic: Animal Kingdom/Plants/
Relationships/Environment

Curriculum link: Natural Science

Text type: Report/Description

Reading level: 24

Word count: 1005

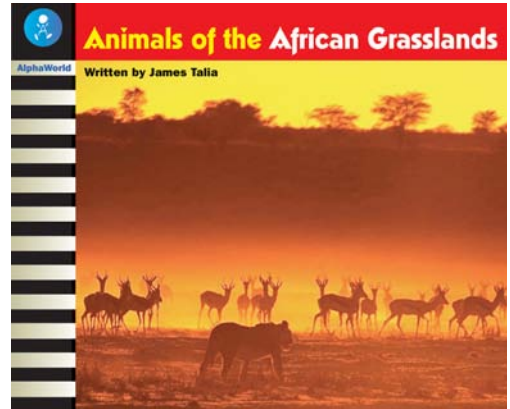
Vocabulary: Africa, African hunting dogs, antelope, browsers, buffalo, cheetah, coarse, gazelles, grasslands, grazers, herds, hyenas, kudu, leopards, meat-eaters, plant-eaters, predators, prey, pride, scavengers, secretary birds, vultures, warning, warthogs, wildebeest

Possible literacy focus:

- Understanding scientific language: plant-eaters, predators, scavengers.
- Discussing what the different animals of the African grasslands eat.
- Identifying adjectives: long, flexible, wide.

ESL possibilities:

- Clarifying the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary: browser, grazer, herd, predator, pride, scavenger.
- Discussing the functions of an introduction and a conclusion in a report.



Summary

This book explains the ways in which animals on the African grasslands find food, and describes the relationships between these animals.

AlphaWorld



ISBN 0-7253-3129-1



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