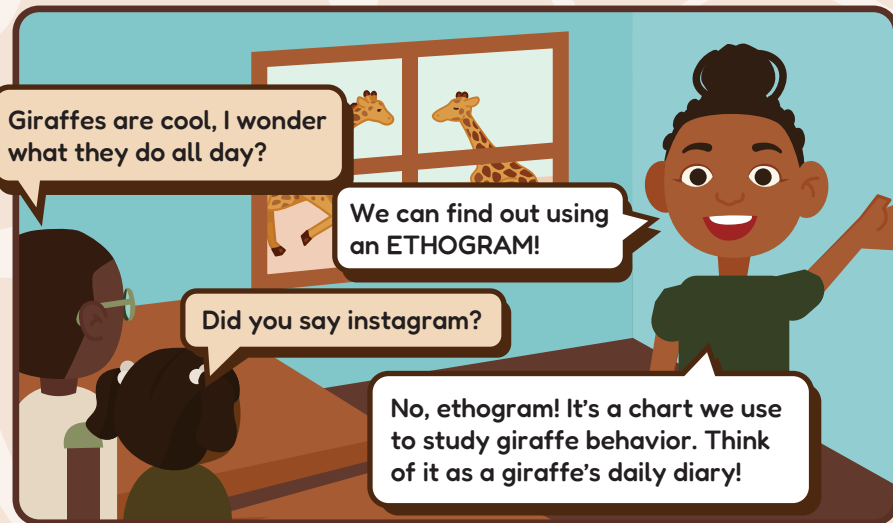




**WORLD  
GIRAFFE WEEK  
2026**

**ACTIVITY PACKET**

# ETHOGRAM BEHAVIORS



## How to use an ethogram

Let's observe a group of giraffes and mark down their behaviors.

When we observe a giraffe do a specific behavior, we will mark it down on our ethogram.

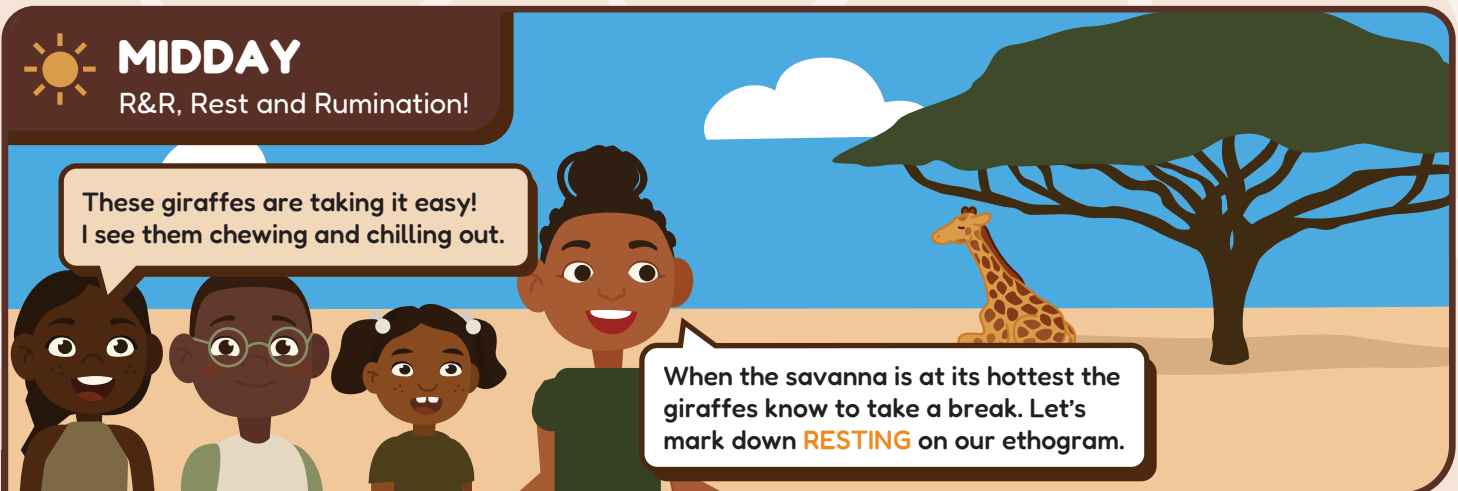
The ethogram will show us what behaviors giraffes do, when they do them, and how often.



## DAWN

Up and eat 'em!

Cool early mornings are the perfect time for the herd of giraffes to walk around. They enjoy a meal of leaves to start the day. Giraffes browse slowly and deliberately on trees like acacia, while remaining vigilant.



## MIDDAY

R&R, Rest and Rumination!

When the day is at its brightest and hottest, giraffes stand silent and still. They conserve energy and digest their morning meal using rumination. Rumination is the process where

giraffes chew their leaves, swallow them, and bring them up later in the day to chew them again. They use their tails to swat flies and long tongues to groom or doze lightly as they wait for the heat to pass.



The giraffes are taking a really long drink of water!

They keep looking around. Do you think they are afraid of something?

Some are eating the small plants beside the water!



## LATE AFTERNOON

A trip to the waterhole!

Giraffes are very vulnerable to predators when they drink. Let's mark the behaviors moving to the water, **DRINKING**, **FEEDING**, and **BEING ALERT** to danger (vigilance).

Every few days the herd of giraffes will walk to a known waterhole or another source of water. Here they will drink up to 50 liters of water. They must splay their forelimbs to bend their heads all the way down. This is

a very vulnerable position for the giraffes, so they drink as quickly as they can and return to their upright posture. They must constantly scan their surroundings to ensure that they are safe from predators.



## EVENING

Dinner time ... look out for lions!

I think the adult giraffes are looking for danger. See how they are staring in the same direction?

There is a lot going on! They are moving and eating.

I see some playing!

That little one is drinking milk! So cute!!!

Now that the day is getting cooler the giraffes are more active. Let's mark down **BEING ALERT**, **MOVING**, **FEEDING** and **SOCIALIZING**.

The giraffes interact with each other forming social bonds. Mothers will groom their calves and allow them to nurse. Young males gently spar. As the day fades into

dark, the giraffe will continue to feed in the cooler air. They are extremely vigilant, for this is also the time predators head out to hunt!

Now that we have completed the ethogram, we can use it to see how the giraffes behave throughout their day.

To me it looks like they do a lot more in the morning and later in the day than midday when it was SOOOO hot out!

Looking at the ethogram they seem to move and feed the most, almost all day!

After a long day of observing giraffes, this ethogram has helped us understand what behaviors they do and when. Now that we know more about how giraffes live, we can better understand them—and how to help protect them!

## ETHOGRAM

TIME	FEEDING	DRINKING	MOVING	SOCIALIZING	BEING ALERT	RESTING
	✓					
			✓	✓	✓	
	✓	✓				✓
	✓		✓	✓	✓	

I wrote the co

THE FIRST "GIRAFFOLOGIST"

# ANNE DAGG



Anne Dagg is noted as a pioneer in animal behavioral science and is the first Western person to study giraffe behavior in the wild.

As a young woman Anne was obsessed with giraffes, however, when she sought out research on them, there was little information on how they behaved. Information was largely anatomical or anecdotes recounted by hunters and explorers.

One such anecdote stood out to Anne; it stated that the giraffe, like the cow, had 25% of full intelligence. This seemed foolish to Anne and a few short years later she would embark to discover the truth about giraffe behavior and intelligence.

In 1956, before any other person had made such a trip, a 23 year-old Anne made the unprecedented solo journey to South Africa to study giraffes in the wild.

She carefully observed giraffes taking extremely detailed notes on their behaviors such as feeding, movement and social interaction. This method would lead future researchers to develop ethograms to study wild animal behavior.

Despite gender-based discrimination she published influential research and advocated for giraffe conservation her whole life. She earned the title of the first "Giraffologist" and demonstrated that caring and conserving our wild giraffes starts with understanding how they live and behave.



**LEARN MORE  
ABOUT JUNIOR  
GIRAFFE CLUB**

[www.juniorgiraffeclub.org](http://www.juniorgiraffeclub.org)



Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## KID-IZEN SCIENCE – ETHOGRAM

# Science is for Everyone!

An **ethogram** is a chart to track what your subject does.

### How to do it:

- Pick something to watch: giraffe, pet, or family member
- Record what they do at 10 observation times
- Observe: once per minute (10 min) or every 5 minutes (50 min)
- Check the box for each action

## My Subject:



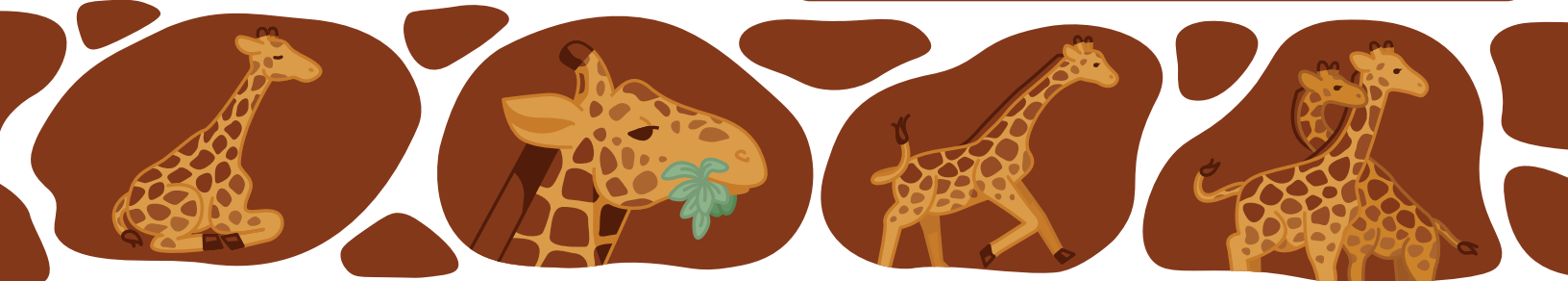
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

( Drawing of Your Subject )



Observation Times	Resting	Eating and Drinking	Moving	Socializing	Additional Notes
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					
:					

### Tell Us What You Found Out:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## How Can You Tell a Giraffe is Nervous?

You can tell a giraffe is nervous when it straightens its neck and lifts its head up high to look at a source of danger—this is called vigilance. It might also snort or grunt when upset.

## Neck & Neck Rivals

Giraffe males battle each other to establish their dominance as they compete for mates.

In a ritualistic fight, males will stand side by side, push against each other, and swing their necks and hit their opponent with their heavy head and bony ossicones.

Big bulls will fight with more intensity, while younger males spar more for practice.



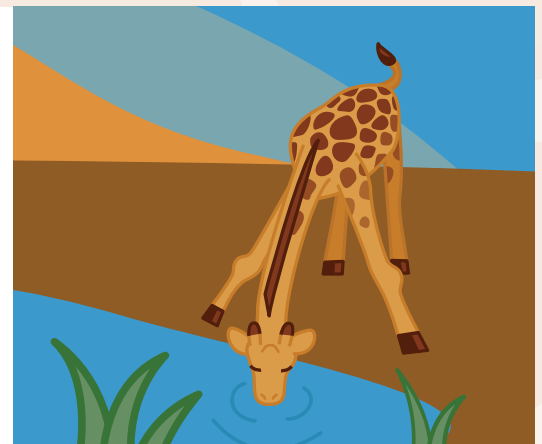
## Yes, Giraffes Can Sleep Like This

Giraffes can rest either standing up for short naps or lying down with their legs folded under their bodies, sometimes curling their necks back to rest their heads on their back.

## Staying Alert While Taking a Drink

Giraffes spread their front legs wide when they bend down to drink water. This helps them lower their long necks to reach the ground.

It also makes them vulnerable to predators, so they stay very alert while drinking.





## **Giraffes Eat for 16–20 Hours a Day!**

Giraffes spend most of their day eating. They devote 16–20 hours a day to munching on acacia leaves (their favorite food) as well as leaves, bark, and various soft shoots from trees and shrubs.

## **A Giraffe Tongue Can Be 25 Inches Long**

Giraffes are browsers. They feed on high growing vegetation, such as tall trees. They have very strong tongues that are 18–25 inches long!

These tongues are designed to maneuver the sharpest thorns and branches. Their tongues have tough skin and protective thick saliva to prevent injuries from sharp thorns. Ouch!



## **Giraffes go to ‘school’ when they are little just like we do.**

Giraffes go to ‘school’ when they are little just like we do. Well, not exactly like we do.

Giraffe mothers will create a nursery group called a creche. A creche is an area where mothers will leave their calves and one or two of the moms will remain to guard and supervise the kiddos.

This reduces the amount of time the mother must stay vigilant protecting her calf, which allows her to forage and drink among other things.

The calves in these groups get a great benefit from being around other giraffe babies. They get to engage in lots of play behavior such as play sparring, chasing and general socialization. They get to form social bonds and learn the basics of being a giraffe.

This is an area of giraffe behaviour which still needs more research to fully understand... great for any future giraffologist!