

Wild Animals Talking Box

Equipment needed:

Toy wild animals to put in the box:

- Lion
- Tiger
- Elephant
- Giraffe
- Zebra
- Hippopotamus
- Crocodile
- Snake
- Monkey

Additional equipment:

- 3 hoops or skipping ropes (to place in a circle)
- Tray to put water in
- Trees (rolled-up paper and leaves: see 2 key word understanding activity for details)
- Pieces of card/paper to colour/draw on (see extending vocabulary activity)
- Feely/cloth bag
- Bricks

Talking Box: Wild Animals

Target: Attention & Listening

Equipment needed: lion, elephant, monkey (from box), 3 hoops or skipping ropes

Jump in!

Put three hoops on the floor (or use skipping ropes laid in three circles). Take the monkey out of the box. Ask the children, “What noise does the monkey make?” Make the noise all together and encourage the children to do the action. Place the monkey in one of the hoops/circles. Do the same with the lion and elephant.

To show the children what to do use an adult to demonstrate first:

Taking turns, make one of the animal sounds for the children to listen to. “What noise did you hear? What animal makes that sound?” When they’ve correctly identified the animal (by telling you or pointing to the animal) tell the child to go and jump into the hoop/circle: “Jump into the lion circle”. Or you can take them to the correct hoop and say, “Jump in”.

Help tips:

- If the child doesn't respond immediately, make the animal sound again. "Listen, again".
- Use the animal action as an extra clue.
- Take the child to the correct hoop/circle.

Continue until all the children have had a turn.

Extending the activity:

Allow the children to take turns making one of the animal sounds for the other children to guess.

Target: Understanding language

You need to know how much the children in your setting understand. You can use these activities to work out how many key words the children understand if you are not sure.

1 key word : Let's hide!

Equipment needed: animals (in the box)

Take the animals out of the box one at a time. Talk about what each animal is called, e.g. "zebra" and about what they look like, e.g. "stripy". Remember that some of these animal names may be less familiar to the children so you will need to go over the names until they become familiar with them.

Place the animals around the room (so that they are still visible). Make it into a hiding game: "All of the animals are hiding from us. I need you to go and find them for me. Jo (gain the child's attention first by calling their name) can you go and find the zebra".

Help tips:

- Repetition of instructions: "Find the zebra. Where's the zebra?" (emphasising the key word-underlined).
- Using pointing to show the child which direction to go in.

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- Asking another child to go with them to help.

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Target: Understanding language
2 key words : Where do I live?

Equipment: tray to put the water in, trees (see below for further information), animals in the box

Fill a tray with some water. Talk about the water “It’s cold” “It’s wet”. Let the children put their hands in and feel the water (they learn by experience). Talk about what could live in the water.

Help the children to make some trees. You could collect some leaves from outside and stick them on rolled up paper or just gather small twigs. Tell the children you are making a jungle. Ask the children what animals they think could live in the jungle. You could use photographs of animals in the jungle to show the children.

Once the water and jungle are ready, start taking the animals out of the box. Talk about each animal and their name. “Where can the animals live? In the water or in the jungle?” Give each child a turn. Ask them things such as “Put the giraffe in the water” (see how the two words underlined are the keywords that the child needs to understand in the instruction). Once they have done this, talk about what the giraffe is going to do e.g. “The giraffe wants to go swimming”.

Help tips:

- Make sure the child is looking at you before giving the instruction.
- Repeat the instruction again if the child does not respond.
- If the child picks up the wrong animal or puts it in the wrong place, encourage them to “listen again” and then repeat the instruction.
- If the child is still unsure then break the instruction into 2 parts e.g. “Find the giraffe”. When they have found the giraffe then say, “Put it in the water”.

Target: Understanding language
3 key words/concept of on/under

Equipment: animals in the box and a chair and table

Before you do this activity you can talk about the animals in the box to remind the children of the animal names.

Introduce the concept of “on” and “under” first. Choose one of the animals and put it on the chair. Emphasise the concept word “He is on the chair”. Give each of the children an opportunity to choose an animal from the box and put it on the chair.

Then put an animal under the chair and again emphasise the word “under”: “He is under the chair”. Give all the children an opportunity to put an animal under the chair too.

Give the children different instructions to follow:

e.g. “Put the elephant under the table” (key words underlined).

Help tips as previous activity

Extension: Guess who?

Place the animals in the box and give the children clues to guess which animal you are describing e.g. It's got a long neck. It likes eating leaves. It's a?" (giraffe).

Target: Talking (spoken language)
What's in the bag?

Equipment: animals, feely/cloth bag

Encourage all the children to close their eyes. Place one of the animals from the Talking Box in a cloth bag. The children can open their eyes again and as the children pass the bag round everyone sings:

**This is the way we pass the bag, pass the
bag, pass the bag**

**This is the way we pass the bag,
I wonder what's inside?**

*(Sing to the tune: Here we go round the
mulberry bush)*

When the song stops, the bag stops with that child. The child needs to take the animal out of the bag, and say what it is. All of the other children make the sound of the animal or you could do an action e.g. pretending to swing a trunk (elephant).

Then encourage the children to close their eyes and the adult swaps the animal in the bag for a new animal. Then sing again.

Help tips:

Don't force children to name what it is. If they are unsure, offer them a choice e.g. "is it an elephant or a lion?"

Target: Talking (spoken language)

It's story-time!

Equipment: story books in your setting

Link the animals in the box with a story already available in your setting. Each time one of the animals is mentioned in the story then take the animal out of the box.

Making **comments** about what happened in the story (e.g. “that was a big elephant!”) will encourage more language from the children than asking questions, but here are some ideas of questions you could ask about the story:

→ These questions are easiest...

- What is this?
- Who is sleeping?
- Where's the zebra?

→ These questions are harder... If the child can answer the questions above try these...

- How did the lion feel?
- What will happen next?

“Why?” questions are the hardest!

(remember there could be lots of different answers)

(ref: Blank Language for Learning Model)

Target: Talking

Extending the activity:

Retell a favourite Wild Animals story:

Once you know children are familiar with a story, then encourage them to retell the story to you. Let the children use the animals in the box to help tell the story.

Story strings: Taking one animal at a time out of the box, encourage children to tell their own story. You could bring in other items from around your setting to link into the story or encourage children to go and find something. (*Idea from Nursery Narrative Pack*)

Target: Extending vocabulary

Equipment: animals, pieces of card/paper with pattern/colour to match animal e.g. black and white stripes for zebra, green for crocodile etc.

Matching game

You could make these cards with the children before you do the activity or prepare them beforehand. Or you could do each card as you go through the activity.

Put the cards up side down and encourage each child to take turns turning a card over. Look at what colour/pattern is on the card and talk about it e.g. "it's stripy". Can the children find what animal matches the pattern? Model the language for the children to hear "Stripy zebra".

Talking Box: Wild Animals

Target: Play & Imagination

Equipment: animals in the box

Let's pretend!

Encourage one of the children to put their hand into the box and select one of the animals. Name the animal or encourage the children to name it e.g. "Elephant". Talk about what sound an elephant makes. How do they move? (Or how many legs?). What do elephants do? Encourage the children to pretend to be elephants (stomping around the room, swinging their arm as a trunk). Continue with other animals from the box.

Help tips:

If the children are reluctant to join in then use the adults in the room to model or select the more confident children to take the lead.

Extending the activity:

Allow one of the children to pretend to be an animal for the other children to guess what animal they are.

Target: Speech and Sound Awareness
For older children
Let's clap! (Syllable clapping)

Equipment needed: animals (in the box)

Open the box. Take one of the animals out of the box. Encourage the children to name e.g. "zebra". Show the children how you can clap the name e.g. "ze-bra" (2 claps).

Extending the activity

1. Encourage the children to give the animal a name. Then clap the name.
2. Counting the number of claps (syllables) in a word: Some children will be able to count the number of claps immediately but other children will need some support. Use something visual for the children to see as you count e.g. bricks (use one brick for each syllable/clap). As the children become more confident then you can encourage them to take the bricks out as you say the word.

- Lion: 1 syllable/clap
- Tiger: 2 syllables/claps
- Elephant: 3 syllables/claps
- Giraffe: 2 syllables/claps
- Zebra: 2 syllables/claps
- Hippopotamus: 5 syllables/claps!!
(Just use hippo: 2 syllables/claps)

- Crocodile: 3 syllables/claps
- Snake: 1 syllable/clap
- Monkey: 2 syllables/2 claps

Target: Speech and Sound Awareness
For older children

Alliteration: What's my name?

Equipment needed: animals (in the box)

Matching names to the animals (using names that have the first sound of the animal)

For example: (you can choose your own if you like):

- **L**eo the **L**ion
- **T**ina the **T**iger
- **E**llie the **E**lephant
- **G**eorge the **G**iraffe
- **Z**oe the **Z**ebra
- **H**arry the **H**ippopotamus
- **C**hris the **C**rocodile
- **S**ally the **S**nake
- **M**olly the **M**onkey

Write the names of the animals on name badges for the children to attach to the right animal (this encourages children to take an interest in print).

Encourage the children to listen to the names as you read them. Read the first name e.g. “Leo”. Repeat it again “Leo” (emphasise the first sound slightly e.g. “**L**eo”). Think aloud, “I wonder if it’s **L**eo the **l**ion or **L**eo the zebra_?. I think Leo the lion sounds best. Can you hear those “l” sounds children, **L**eo the **l**ion?”

Book Ideas

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell

Giraffes can't dance by Giles Andreae & Guy Parker-Rees

Hippo has a hat by Julia Donaldson & Nick Sharratt

That's not my lion by Fiona Watt & Rachel Wells

That's not my monkey by Fiona Watt & Rachel Wells

The Tiger who came to Tea by Judith Kerr

Let's Sing

Song: Down in the jungle

Down in the jungle where nobody goes
There's a great big gorilla washing his clothes
With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there
This is the way he washes his clothes
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie boo!
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie boo!
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie boo!
That's the way he washes his clothes
Down in the jungle where nobody goes
There's a slithery snake washing his clothes
With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there
This is the way he washes his clothes
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie sss
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie sss
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie sss
That's the way he washes his clothes
Down in the jungle where nobody goes
There's a great big crocodile washing his clothes
A rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there
This is the way he washes his clothes
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie snap
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie snap
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie snap
That's the way he washes his clothes
Down in the jungle where nobody goes
There's a great big elephant washing his clothes
A rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there
This is the way he washes his clothes
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie bop
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie bop
Boom boodie, boom boodie, boogie woogie bop
That's the way he washes his clothes
Boogie woogie woogie woogie woo!

Remember: Sing slowly so the children can hear the words!

Have a look on the Cbeebies website for other wild animal songs that the children might be familiar with