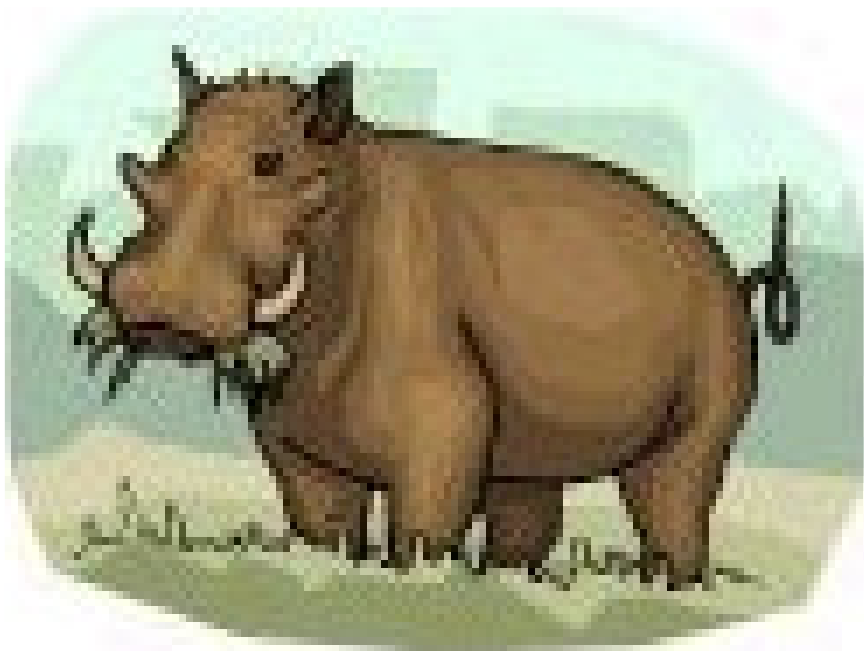


# Warthog



Warthogs are perhaps one of the most unattractive-looking animals on Earth! First, their heads seem too large for their bodies. Second, there are two or three pairs of wart-like bumps on their flat, shovel-shaped faces. Third, four tusks protrude from their jaws, giving them a forceful appearance. Fourth, while warthogs have sparse hair on their brown skin, they have long manes extending from the top of their heads to the middle of their backs. Well, although warthogs look rather strange, or down right ugly to some people, they are very interesting.

Living in African savannahs, warthogs are the only pig species that can live in places where absence of water during the dry season can last for a couple of months a year! Adding to the uniqueness is that warthogs are also the only pig species that graze grasses. When warthogs are hungry, they kneel on their padded front knees to nip off short grass or to dig bulbs, roots, and tubers with their snouts and tusks. Occasionally, warthogs eat carrions (dead animals), too. Warthogs look tougher and meaner than they actually are. If threatened, warthogs most likely choose to flee from the scene than to challenge their enemies. When warthogs are on a run, they hold their tails upright like an antenna.

Warthogs are active during the daytime. As night falls, they return to their underground homes or burrows. Although warthogs have sharp tusks that they can use to excavate their own burrows, they prefer not to. Usually, they find and occupy burrows abandoned by other animals. Among all the choices they have, they like armadillos' work the best! Warthogs are extremely cautious when they enter or exit their homes. When warthogs are about to reach home, they slowly back up into their residence with their heads facing outward so they can detect any impending danger, such as a lion or a vicious hyena hidden nearby. When warthogs are ready to leave their burrows, they rush out at their top speed, about 30 miles per hour so they can get a running start on any predators that may be lurking nearby.

Photograph by Chris Johns

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/printable/warthog.html>

## **Fast Facts**

Type: Mammal

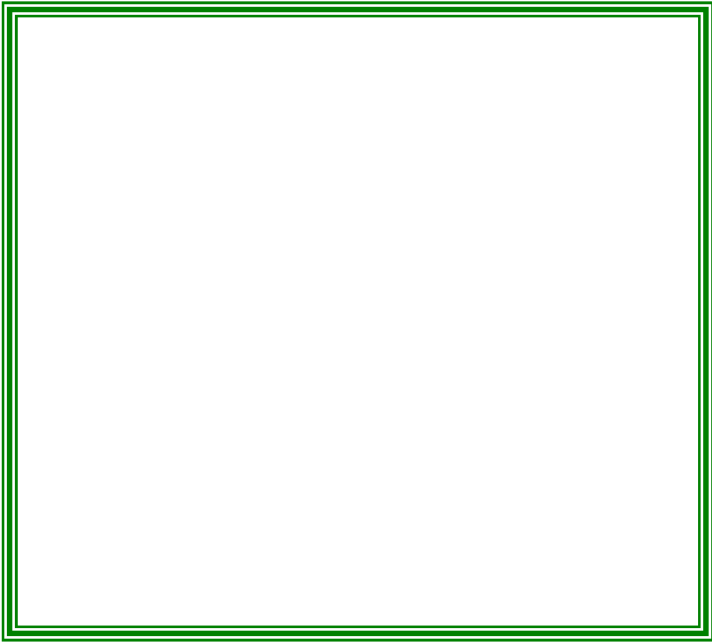
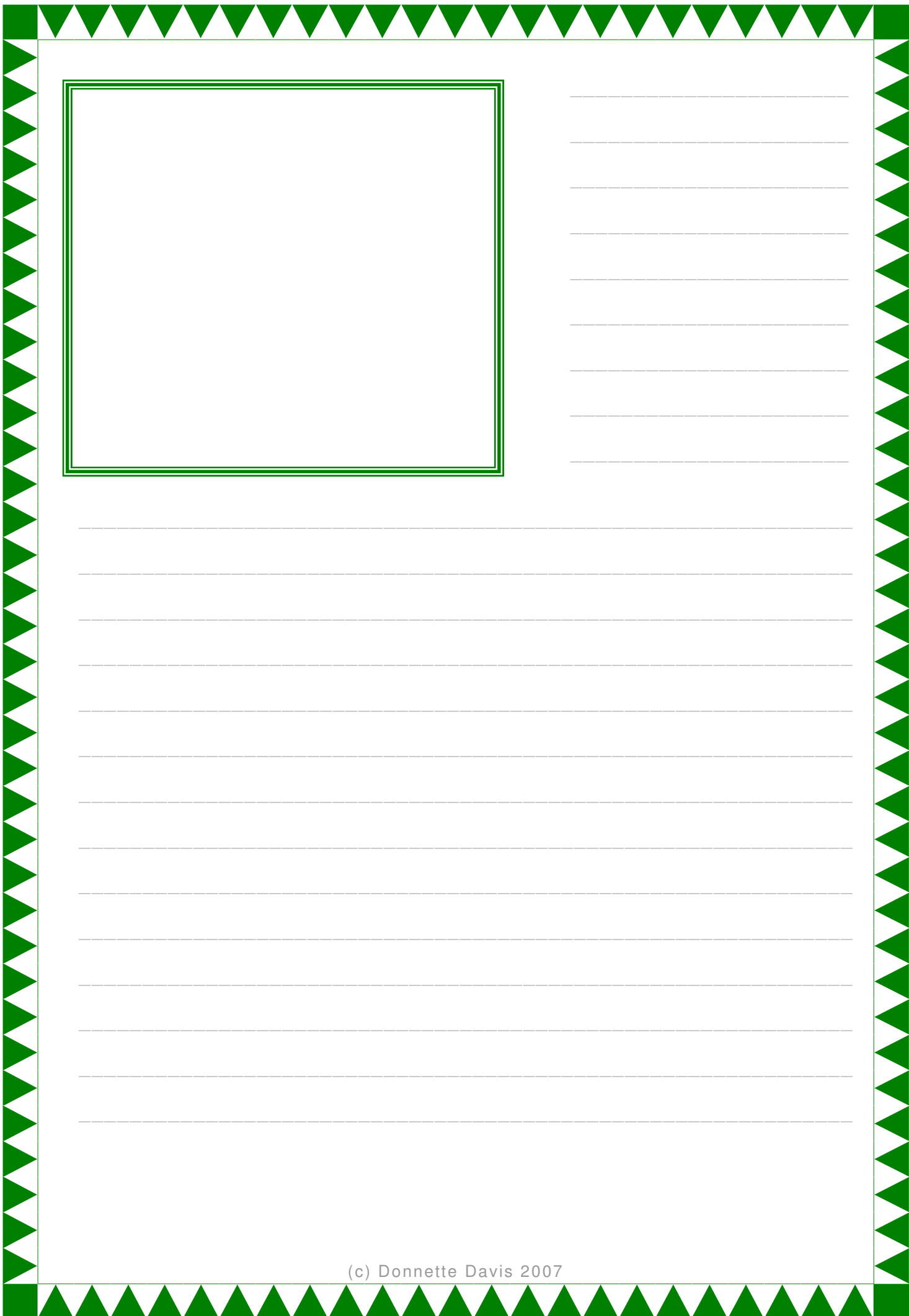
Diet: Herbivore

Average lifespan in the wild: 15 years

Size: Height at shoulder, 30 in (76 cm)

Weight: 120 to 250 lbs (54.5 to 113 kg)





Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten horizontal dashed lines.

Main body of handwriting practice lines consisting of fifteen horizontal dashed lines.

A series of 18 horizontal dashed lines for handwriting practice, arranged in a single column within a decorative green border.



Warthogs are members of the same family as domestic pigs, but present a much different appearance. These sturdy hogs are not among the world's most aesthetically pleasing animals—their large, flat heads are covered with "warts," which are actually protective bumps. Warthogs also sport four sharp tusks. They are mostly bald, but they do have some sparse hair and a thicker mane on their backs.

Though warthogs appear ferocious, they are basically grazers. They eat grasses and plants, and also use their snouts to dig or "root" for roots or bulbs. When startled or threatened, warthogs can be surprisingly fast, running at speeds of up to 30 miles (48 kilometers) an hour.

Warthogs are adaptable and are able to go long periods without water, as much as several months in the dry season.

When water is available, warthogs will seek it and often submerge to cool down. They will also wallow in mud for the same purpose—and to gain relief from insects. Birds also aid these hogs in their battle with insects; oxpeckers and other species sometimes ride along on their warthog hosts, feeding on the tiny creatures invading their hides.

These African hogs often utilize empty dens created by armadillos. Rather than fight, they often choose flight, and search for such a den to use as a hidey-hole. They typically back in, using their tusks to effectively guard the entrance.

Warthogs also use these dens to have their young. Females have litters of four or fewer young, which they suckle for about four months.

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