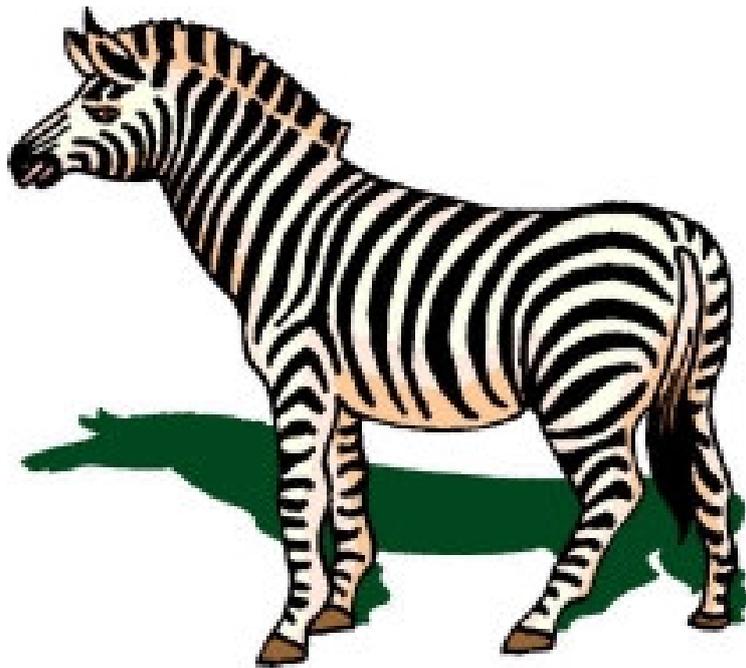


The Zebra



Zebras are horses in black and white stripes! They are very sociable animals. They like to travel in large herds that are made up of many small family units.

A zebra family usually consists of one stallion (male zebra), several mares (female zebras), and their foals (young zebras). Because a herd may have hundreds of zebras, staying close to its family can be a very challenging task for a zebra. Scientists believe that a zebra can recognize its family members by their unique black-and-white stripe patterns. Therefore, even if a foal wanders off and gets mixed up with other zebra families, it can always reunite with its own family by looking for special fur designs that its siblings or parents have.

Within a zebra family, a strict order of seniority is carefully observed. This social hierarchy is most noticeable when a zebra family travels across savannahs in search of food or water. The oldest mare walks in the first place. Behind her are her foals, and then the second oldest mare and her foals, and then the third oldest mare and her foals, and so forth. There is only a single stallion dominating an entire zebra family, and he is always the last in line.



No animal has a more distinctive coat than the zebra. Each animal's stripes are as unique as fingerprints—no two are exactly alike—although each of the three species has its own general pattern.

Why do zebras have stripes at all? Scientists aren't sure, but many theories center on their utility as some form of camouflage. The patterns may make it difficult for predators to identify a single animal from a running herd and distort distance at dawn and dusk. Or they may dissuade insects that recognize only large areas of single-colored fur or act as a kind of natural sunscreen. Because of their uniqueness, stripes may also help zebras recognize one another.

Zebras are social animals that spend time in herds. They graze together, primarily on grass, and even groom one another.

Plains (Burchell's) zebras are the most common species. They live in small family groups consisting of a male (stallion), several females, and their young. These units may combine with others to form awe-inspiring herds thousands of head strong, but family members will remain close within the herd.

Zebras must be constantly wary of lions and hyenas. A herd has many eyes alert to danger. If an animal is attacked, its family will come to its defense, circling the wounded zebra and attempting to drive off predators.

Source: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/zebra.html>

FAST FACTS

The scientific name for the mountain zebra is *Equus zebra*. The Grevy's zebra is *Equus grevyi*. Mountain and Grevy's zebras are endangered species.

A group of zebras is called a herd.

Zebras live in parts of Africa.

The Zebra belongs to the horse family. Its distinguishing marks are its unique black stripes, akin to the fingerprints on humans.

One of nature's great mysteries is why the Zebra has stripes. One theory is that the stripes help the zebra cool down. On hot days the black stripes get a lot hotter than the white area of the zebra and under the black stripes there are special layers of fat for protection. Hot air then rises off the black stripes forcing colder air down around the white areas thus cooling the zebra down. This, however is just a theory.

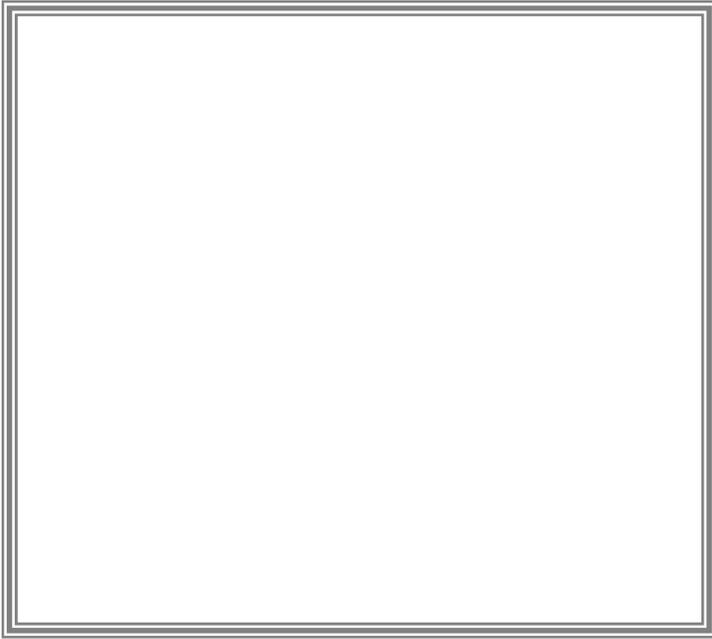
The stripes are also used as camouflage to confuse predators when zebras huddle in great numbers or mingle with herds of antelopes. The Zebra enjoys grazing the plains & savannahs during the day and sleeping during the night roaming in groups with one or two members acting as lookouts during the night.

At first glance zebras in a herd might all look alike, but their stripe patterns are as distinctive as fingerprints are in man.

On average, a zebra in the wild lives 25 years.

Source: http://www.sa-venues.com/wildlife/wildlife_zebra.htm





Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten horizontal dashed lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of fifteen horizontal dashed lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 18 horizontal dashed lines on a white background.



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- National Geographic
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- Wikipedia
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- African Wildlife Federation
- http://www.sa-venues.com/wildlife/wildlife_zebra.htm

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