



Animal Observation Project

Questions and Activities:

- Choose one dolphin at Marineland's Dolphin Conservation Center on which to do a physical and behavioral observation. You may pick any animal you'd like, but you must stick with that individual, so be sure you've identified a distinguishing characteristic about it that will help you keep it in view, even if it lives with a group of other animals that look just like it.

PHYSICAL OBSERVATION

- Draw your animal in the space below:

- Conclusions:
 - What distinguishing characteristic did you use to identify this animal?

 - What physical adaptations do you see on your animal that help it to survive in its environment? (Body shape? Coloration?)

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- What do you think these adaptations help the animal to do? (Avoid predators, Catch prey?)

BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATION

Observe your dolphin for 5 minutes. Note any behaviors you see and the length of time these behaviors last.

Behavior Observed	Length of Time Observed
Example: Ball Play	2 minutes 15 seconds

Conclusions:

- What behavior did you see your animal do the most?

- What behavior did you see your animal do the least?

- What kind of conclusions can you make from your observations? (Keep in mind that your three minute observation does not represent a full day of the animal's life.)

- Do you think their behavior is different depending on time of day? Time of year? Weather?

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- How would behavioral observations such as the one you just completed help a dolphin trainer care for the animal?

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ENRICHMENT

Dolphins at Marineland's Dolphin Conservation Center often play with toys. List some toys you see the dolphins playing with.

Why do you think the trainers give the dolphins toys?

TRAINING

Observe a training session between a trainer and a dolphin. What tools do you see being used?

What are some reasons to train dolphins?

What do you think are important skills for becoming a dolphin trainer?