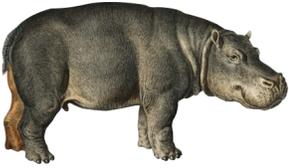
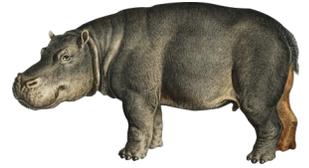


Animals of the World: Mammals



THE HIPPOPOTAMUS



The hippopotamus is a large mammal capable of living comfortably in the water, so it is considered semi-aquatic animals. Its name comes from Greek and means a water horse.

Currently, there are only two species of the hippopotamus: the common hippopotamus and the pygmy hippopotamus. Both live on the African continent in the central and southern sub-Saharan Africa. There are about 150,000 wild hippos.

It is the second-largest animal in the world, after the elephants. The hippopotamus has a very large body, similar to a barrel, and can weigh from a ton and a half to three tons. Generally, males are larger than females.

The hippopotamus is graceful in the water because they are good swimmers and can hold their breath for up to five minutes. Their eyes and nostrils are located at the top of their heads. This helps them to see and breathe while submerged. They can run fast if they feel threatened on land.

The hippopotamus stays underwater for long periods because they need to cool off from the intense heat of the savanna. They spend up to 16 hours a day in the water, either partially submerged or lying in mudflats. Its body secretes a reddish substance that serves as an antiseptic, skin moisturizer, and sunscreen for them.



They live in groups of up to 30 hippos called herds or pods. Despite its calm appearance, it is considered one of the most aggressive and irritable animals in the animal kingdom. Because they are territorial, it is advisable not to approach them under any circumstances.



They remain submerged or close to the water during the day, but at sunset, when the temperature drops, they head to land to graze. They spend the night grazing, consuming up to 90 kilos of grass. They travel up to ten kilometers to find food.

A hippopotamus can live between 45 and 50 years. They grow in size for 25 years. The oldest hippopotamus on record lived until he was 61 years old in a zoo in Germany.

The hippopotamus uses its incisors and canine teeth to fight for its territory, not for eating. These teeth grow throughout their life, measuring up to a meter and a half long. They are made of ivory, as are the tusks of elephants. Because the price for ivory is high, so the hippopotamus is hunted illegally.

Hippopotamus mate underwater. Females reach sexual maturity at five years and males at seven years. They usually reproduce after the rainy season when there is abundant water in rivers and lakes.

The gestation period lasts eight months. The females give birth underwater, and immediately after, the offspring go ashore to take their first breath of air. A young hippopotamus weighs about 50 kilograms at birth. Infants remain with their mothers until they are fully developed about eight years of age.



Name _____

Date _____

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

1. Read the text carefully and complete the sentences.

- a. Hippopotamus are huge _____ living in _____
- b. Generally, the size of the males is _____ than that of the females.
- c. They live in communities of approximately _____ hippos.
- d. The hippopotamus is considered _____ and _____.

2. A hippopotamus can weigh between one ton and a half and three tons, which is between 1500 kilos and 3000 kilos. If a car weighs approximately one ton, which of them weighs about the same as a hippopotamus.

- a. plasma television
- b. your grandma's bag
- c. small yacht or boat
- d. salon curtains
- e. bed mattress



3. A hippopotamus is a good runner but a bad swimmer.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Match the word with its definition. If you don't know its meaning, look it up in the dictionary.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| a. Antiseptic | 1. Moistens and softens the skin. |
| b. Moisturizer | 2. Avoid or reduce the effects of the sun. |
| c. Sunscreen | 3. Reduce infections. |

5. A hippopotamus spends hours underwater because _____

- a. it cannot breathe easily if it is on land.
- b. it is hot on land, and its skin gets dry when it is out of the water.
- c. that's where it hunts and fishes for its food.
- d. it is territorial and does not like to move out of the water.



Name _____

Date _____

6. The average life of a hippopotamus is _____

- a. 150000 years
- b. 16 years
- c. 50 years
- d. 25 years



7. The hippopotamus is extremely territorial, so it is advisable to approach them.

- a. True
- b. False

8. Hippos graze at night because _____

- a. it is cooler at night; they won't burn in the heat.
- b. it is the best time to hunt small prey.
- c. they see better at night.
- d. they like to sleep during the day.



9. The mating time of the hippos is usually _____

- a. in dry periods, the more the better.
- b. throughout the year, but preferably when temperatures rise.
- c. after the rainy season.
- d. in the months of February and October.

10. If you go on an African savanna safari and see a hippo group, _____

- a. get out of the vehicle and pet their soft skin.
- b. the smartest thing is to stay in the vehicle.
- c. shout loudly out the window to irritate them, and they will leave.
- d. shoot them so they can't attack you.