

Animal Enrichment

How to maintain the mental health and well-being of zoo animals

Animal Care

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the session:

- ✓ **All students** will understand the importance of enrichment and its benefits for animals.
- ✓ **Most students** will understand the process involved in establishing a successful enrichment programme.
- ✓ **Some students** will understand how different situations and circumstances will require different forms of enrichment and how to implement them successfully.

Session Outline:

The session begins by comparing the needs of wild animals (finding food, avoiding predators, defending territory) with those of captive animals (provided food, safe from predators, secure territory). This leads to a discussion on abnormal behaviors and how enrichment helps prevent or reduce them. The five main enrichment categories—food-based, social, sensory, physical habitat, and cognitive—are introduced with examples from zoos worldwide. The S.P.I.D.E.R. method for effective enrichment planning is then explained through a case study on reducing pacing in a giant anteater. The session concludes with a zoo tour to observe real-world examples and ask questions to animal keepers.



Curriculum Links

- Enrichment
- Sensory, novelty, physical, social, problem solving enrichment
- Abnormal behaviour
- Record keeping and monitoring
- S.P.I.D.E.R.