MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

BACTRIAN CAMEL

Camelus bactrianus

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal (camel family, Camelidae)
NATIVE REGION	Central Asia (Gobi Desert)
HABITAT	Desert, from over 120°F in summer to –20°F in winter
DIET	Mostly plants, even dry, prickly and salty ones
HUMPS	Two
HEIGHT	6 to 7½ feet
WEIGHT	660 to 2,200 lb
LIFESPAN	Up to 50 years
STATUS	Domestic (the wild camel is a separate species)
OUR CAMEL	Lilly, born August 3, 2005



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- A camel's humps store fat, not water.
- A very thirsty camel can drink about 15 gallons, often within minutes.
- Bactrian camels grow a thick winter coat and shed it in big sheets and clumps in spring.
- Camels can close their nostrils to keep out sand, and they have two rows of long eyelashes.
- Camels walk with a pacing gait: both legs on one side move together.

Words to know

Hump: A store of fat on a camel's back.
Shedding: Losing an old coat of hair.
Gait: The way an animal walks or runs.
Domestic: Raised and cared for by people for a long time.

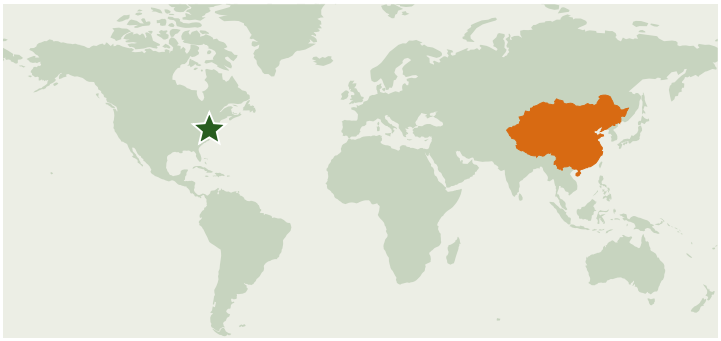
Think about it

1. What is stored in a camel's humps, and what happens to the humps when it runs low?
2. Why does Lilly look so scruffy in spring?
3. How do a camel's nostrils, eyelashes and feet help it in the desert?
4. How is a Bactrian camel different from a dromedary?
5. Is a domestic Bactrian camel the same as a wild camel? Explain.

Draw it

Draw Lilly, our Bactrian camel. Label her two humps, her shaggy coat, her long eyelashes and her big flat footpads.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/bactrian-camel/ · **Sources:** Animal Diversity Web; Wild Camel Protection Foundation; Plumpton Park Zoo records.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G)
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BACTRIAN CAMEL

Before and after your visit

Page 2 of the Bactrian camel fact sheet · © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the Bactrian camel live?
Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?
☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.
☐ Hump ☐ Shedding ☐ Gait ☐ Domestic

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the Bactrian camel.

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?
☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching
☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Central Asia (Gobi Desert). Was your guess right?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Mostly plants, even dry, prickly and salty ones. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.
- Why does Lilly look so scruffy in spring?
- How do a camel's nostrils, eyelashes and feet help it in the desert?

4. Exit ticket.
One thing I learned: _____
One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT
Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/bactrian-camel/ · Fact sheet page 1 has the fast facts, map and vocabulary this page refers to.
Grades 3–4 · Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G**

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