MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

COUGARS

Puma concolor · also called mountain lions or pumas

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal; cat family (Felidae)
NATIVE REGION	North, Central and South America
HABITAT	Forests, mountains, grasslands and deserts
DIET	Carnivore; deer and other mammals
SIZE	About 5–8 feet, including the tail
WEIGHT	About 66–176 lbs; males usually larger
LIFESPAN	Typically 8–12 years in the wild
STATUS	Least Concern globally



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Nicole and Niko are the cougars at Plumpton Park Zoo.
- Cougar, mountain lion and puma are names for the same species.
- Cougars can climb and leap up to 20 feet vertically.
- Kittens have spots that fade as they grow.
- Cougars cannot roar. They can growl, hiss and purr.

Words to know

Carnivore: An animal that eats other animals.
Solitary: Usually living or traveling alone.
Cache: Food stored for later.
Fragmentation: Habitat broken into separated pieces.

Think about it

1. What are two other names for a cougar?
2. Use the page as evidence: how do claws help a cougar hunt?
3. How does a mother help her kittens survive?
4. How does a kitten's coat differ from an adult's?
5. Why can separated pieces of habitat be a problem?

Draw it

Draw a cougar. Label its ears, paws, claws and long tail. Choose one part and explain how it helps the animal survive.

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

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A**

Where it lives in the wild



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

Draw here

Learn more: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/cougar/ · **Sources:** NPS Yellowstone and Bighorn Canyon; USFWS; IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group; Texas Tech University; South Dakota GFP; UF/IFAS.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A)
Plumpton Park Zoo · 1416 Telegraph Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911 · (410) 658-6850 · plumptonparkzoo.org · a 501(c)(3) nonprofit zoo

FIELD TRIP WORKSHEET · PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

COUGARS

Before and after your visit

 © 2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.
Teachers may copy and share this sheet freely as long as they credit Plumpton Park Zoo.

Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the cougar 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.

☐ Carnivore ☐ Solitary ☐ Cache ☐ Fragmentation

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 cougar.

_____

_____

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: North, Central and South America. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Carnivore; deer and other mammals. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

• How does a kitten's coat differ from an adult's?

_____

_____

• Why can separated pieces of habitat be a problem?

_____

_____

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: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/cougar/ · Fact sheet page 1 has the fast facts, map and vocabulary this page refers to.

Grade 4 · Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A**