MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

RETICULATED GIRAFFE

Giraffa reticulata · *also called Somali giraffe*

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

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal (giraffe family, Giraffidae)
NATIVE REGION	Northern Kenya; possibly southern Somalia and Ethiopia
HABITAT	Dry savannas and open woodlands
DIET	Browser: leaves, flowers, seed pods, fruit
HEIGHT	15 to 19 feet
WEIGHT	1,540 to 2,425 lb
TONGUE	About 18 inches, dark purple-black
LIFESPAN	Roughly 20 to 25 years in the wild
STATUS	Endangered
OUR GIRAFFES	Kazar, Jill and Asha



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

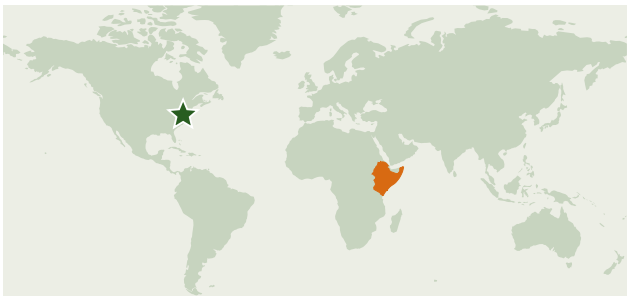
Did you know?

- A giraffe has seven neck bones, the same number as you. Each one is just enormous.
- A giraffe's heart pushes blood about six feet uphill to the brain, so its blood pressure is about twice a human's.
- Giraffes may sleep as little as thirty minutes to two hours a day, mostly in short standing naps.
- A newborn calf drops about six feet to the ground and is already about six feet tall.
- Jimmie lived at Plumpton Park for 25 years. When he died in November 2021, at 26½, he was the oldest living male reticulated giraffe in the world.

Words to know

Browser: An animal that eats leaves, twigs and fruit from trees and shrubs.
Ossicones: The knobs on a giraffe's head: bone covered in skin and fur.
Reticulated: Marked with a net-like pattern of lines.
Endangered: At risk of disappearing from the wild.

Where it lives in the wild



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

Think about it

1. Where does the reticulated giraffe get its name?
2. Why do scientists think a giraffe's tongue is so dark?
3. How is a giraffe's neck like yours, and how is it different?
4. A giraffe calf falls about six feet when it is born. What three things does that drop do for the calf?
5. Why do researchers call the giraffe's decline a "silent extinction"?

Draw it

Draw a reticulated giraffe reaching for leaves. Label its ossicones, long neck, dark tongue and the net-like pattern on its coat.

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

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

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/giraffe/ · **Sources:** IUCN Red List; Giraffe Conservation Foundation; Peoria Zoo; Plumpton Park Zoo records.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS1-1 (3.1.3.A)
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FIELD TRIP WORKSHEET · PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

RETICULATED GIRAFFE

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the reticulated giraffe 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.

☐ Browser ☐ Ossicones ☐ Reticulated ☐ Endangered

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 reticulated giraffe.

_____

_____

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: Northern Kenya; possibly southern Somalia and Ethiopia. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Browser: leaves, flowers, seed pods, fruit. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

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

• Why do scientists think a giraffe's tongue is so dark?

_____

• How is a giraffe's neck like yours, and how is it different?

_____

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/giraffe/ · 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-LS1-1** · Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.A**

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