MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

SHEEP

Ovis aries

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

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal: domestic sheep
NATIVE REGION	First raised in the region of modern Iran and Iraq, about 10,000–11,000 years ago
DIET	Herbivore: grasses, clover and other pasture plants
HEIGHT	2–3 ft at the shoulder
WEIGHT	100–220 lb
LIFESPAN	10–12 years; up to 20 in human care
SOCIAL LIFE	Flock
STATUS	Domesticated; not an IUCN risk category
OUR SHEEP	Rescued domestic sheep and Valais Blacknose sheep



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Sheep were one of the first animals people domesticated.
- There are more than 1,000 sheep breeds in the world.
- Their sideways, rectangular pupils give them a view of nearly 300 degrees.
- Valais Blacknose sheep come from the Swiss Alps and have black faces, ears, knees and hocks.
- Lambs can stand soon after birth and drink their mother's milk.

Words to know

Ewe: A female sheep.
Ram: A male sheep.
Flock: A group of sheep that stay together.
Ruminant: An animal that brings food back up to chew again as cud.

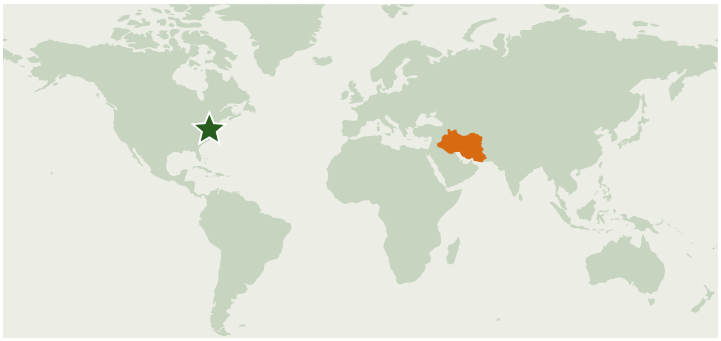
Think about it

1. Where were sheep first raised by people?
2. How do a sheep's eyes help it watch for danger?
3. Why might a resting sheep still be moving its jaws?
4. What helps a lamb follow its mother, and what does its mother give it?
5. How can sheep in one flock look so different from each other?

Draw it

Draw a Valais Blacknose sheep. Label its fleece, black face, horns, knees and hocks.

Where people first raised it



First raised here ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 1–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 1-LS1-2 · 3-LS3-1**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.1.B · 3.1.3.C**

Draw here

Learn more: https://plumptonparkzoo.org/mammals/sheep/ · **Sources:** Valais Blacknose Sheep Society; Animal Diversity Web; University of Minnesota Extension; Banks et al., Science Advances 2015
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 1-LS1-2 (3.1.1.B) · 3-LS3-1 (3.1.3.C)
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SHEEP

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where did people first raise this animal?

Circle 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.

☐ Ewe ☐ Ram ☐ Flock ☐ Ruminant

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 sheep.

_____

_____

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. Page 1 says: First raised in the region of modern Iran and Iraq, about 10,000–11,000 years ago. Was your guess right?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Herbivore: grasses, clover and other pasture plants. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

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

• What helps a lamb follow its mother, and what does its mother give it?

_____

• How can sheep in one flock look so different from each other?

_____

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.