

WEEKDAY WONDERS



Content developed by the
Tennessee Aquarium
Education Department



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Diversity of Living Things: Day 1

This week through Weekday Wonders, young scientists will delve into the diversity of living things. The week starts with your scientist discovering basic physical characteristics of animals. Then scientists will explore how these characteristics are tools to help sort animals into groups. Young scientists finish the week by looking at how the differences in these characteristics, even within the same group, play an important role in their survival.

These curated activities are listed in a suggested sequence but may be done in the order that works best for you and your young scientists. Learn more about this series in the [Introduction to Weekday Wonders](#).



Question of the Day

What physical characteristics do animals have?



Daily Nature Journal

Ask your young scientist to spend some time outside completing their daily nature journal. Use the [Guide to Nature Journaling](#) to support them in nature journaling each day.



Crazy Critters

In this activity, your scientist will create his or her own unique and crazy critter using different animal characteristics. Ask him or her to find a single 6-sided die from any game that uses dice*. Print the general body outline on page 4 or allow your scientist to draw one. With these two items, your young scientist is ready to get started.

Have your young scientist choose which body part s/he wants to add to the critter (mouth, arms/hands, legs/feet, and body covering), and then roll the die. Your scientist should match the number on the die to the number in the chart on page 3 and draw the corresponding physical characteristic on their critter. For example, if your scientist rolls a “6” for the mouth, s/he will draw a wide mouth with large sharp teeth.

When your scientist has added all four characteristics, s/he has made a crazy critter! Ask your scientist to think about where his or her critter might live, what they might eat, and how they might move. Your scientist could complete this activity as many times as s/he wants for lots of crazy critters!

**If you don't have any dice, you could write the characteristics on slips of paper and have your scientist draw one from each category to make their critter.*



Ready, Set, Action!

Ask your young scientist to create and act out a story starring one or more of the crazy critters from the previous activity. Remind your scientist to think about the animal's characteristics when planning the story. Looking at its body covering, where does your scientist think the animal lives? With the type of mouth that the animal has, what does your scientist think it might eat? Based on its hands and feet, how do they think the animal would move?

If you have more than one scientist, encourage them to work together and think about the characteristics of their critters that are similar and different.



Nature Journal

Have your young scientist draw an animal s/he sees outside or around the house. Ask your scientist to circle some of the physical characteristics of the animal. If you have an older scientist, encourage him or her to write how the animal's unique characteristics might help that animal survive where it lives. This might include behaviors, such as how it moves or eats, or its physical characteristics, such as fur or feet.

Crazy Critters Chart

Roll	Mouth	Roll	Legs/Feet
1	Long, thin beak with long tongue	1	Webbed feet
2	Strong, square-shaped teeth	2	Six long, thin legs
3	No teeth and a sticky tongue	3	Flippers or fins
4	Rows of small, sharp teeth	4	Toes with long claws
5	Large, sharp pointed beak	5	Short legs with hooves
6	Wide mouth with large sharp teeth	6	Paws with four toes

Roll	Arms/Hands	Roll	Body Covering
1	Large Wings	1	Long, curly hair
2	Paws with sharp claws	2	Tough, shiny scales
3	Flippers or fins	3	Smooth skin
4	Fingers with sticky pads	4	Lots of feathers
5	Pincher claws	5	Short, straight fur
6	Hooves	6	Bumpy skin

Crazy Critters Body Outline

