

Animal Gestation Periods

Pos - describe the changes as humans develop to old age
NaG - pupils could work scientifically by researching the gestation periods of other animals and comparing them with humans

WS - pupils should identify scientific evidence that has been used to support or refute ideas or arguments

1) What does the term 'gestation period' mean?

2) Cut and paste the animals into their correct place in the 'gestation' table.

3) Use reference books or the internet to find out the average number of babies each animal has per pregnancy and its average life span.

Animal	Gestation Period (days)	Animal	Average number of babies per pregnancy	Average life span of the animal
Cat (domestic)	62			
Cow	280			
Chimpanzee	237			
Dog	62			
Elephant, African	640			
Fox	52			

Animal	Gestation Period (days)	Animal	Average number of babies per pregnancy	Average life span of the animal
Giraffe	395-425			
Goat	151			
Hamster	16			
Horse	337			
Human	266			
Rabbit	21			

4) Which animals have the longest and shortest gestation periods?

5) Is there any relationship between the size of the animal and the length of its gestation period?



6) Is there any relationship between the size of animal and the number of babies that it has?

7) Is there any relationship between the average lifespan of each animal and the number of babies that it has?

8) Why do you think some animals give birth to multiple babies and some to only one or two?

9) Which of the animals in the table need the longest period of parental support before they leave their parents and begin having babies themselves?

10) Knowing what you do about animals and their gestation periods, estimate the length of gestation period for the animals below and the average number of babies you think each will have per pregnancy. Use reference books or the internet to check your estimates and record the actual length of gestation period and the average number of babies per pregnancy. Indicate whether or not you feel you made sensible estimates.

Camel



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____

Seal



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____

Wolf



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____

Squirrel



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____

Polar bear



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____

Rhino



Predicted gestation period _____
Predicted number of babies _____
Actual gestation period _____
Actual number of babies _____
Were your predictions accurate? _____