



John Ball Zoo: Exhibit Evaluation

Activity Overview

Designing exhibits requires tremendous work and consideration for the various groups of people and animals involved in the exhibit's use. Over time, views have shifted to allow for better environmental conditions for animals, more immersive exhibits for visitors, and increased functionality for zookeepers. Students will be looking into ways zoo exhibits address the needs of all three groups and evaluate the quality of the designs.

Objective

Students will evaluate the quality of a zoo exhibit according to the needs of animals, visitors, and zookeepers.

Materials

Exhibit Evaluation Form (1 per exhibit)

Procedure

1. Before taking a zoo field trip, make sure students are familiar with exhibit design. Have students discuss what an exhibit designer needs to consider in the planning stages before an exhibit is built. Lead students to focus on three important groups: animals, zookeepers, and visitors. How might they design an exhibit that works well for all three groups? As a class, brainstorm a list of things that each group would need to make a quality exhibit.
2. Have students reflect on which exhibit features are most important. Is it possible for exhibit designers to meet every need in an exhibit? What are the limiting factors? Answers could include needing money, the personality of the animal, or restricted space designated for building.
3. Introduce students to the Exhibit Evaluation Form. Inform students that they will be acting as exhibit evaluators for the zoo. Using their knowledge of what makes an exceptional zoo exhibit, they will be evaluating how well the planning stage was executed. They will be expected to justify their reasoning for choosing the ranking they did, so it is important to do a thorough analysis. Insist the students take time to explore the exhibit and observe how the visitors interact to collect evidence to support their ranking.
4. When you return to school, have students share their findings.

Exhibit Evaluation

Observer(s) _____ Date/Time _____

Animal Species/Location _____

In the box below, draw a floor plan or diagram of this exhibit.



My immediate response to this exhibit is:	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)
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Animal Needs

Does the exhibit reflect the animal's natural habitat?	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)
Does the animals have enough space to move around the exhibit?	Cramped (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Ample (5)
Are there sufficient hiding places for the animal in the exhibit?	None (1)	(2)	Some (3)	(4)	Many (5)
Are there items the animal can play with in the exhibit?	None (1)	(2)	Some (3)	(4)	Many (5)
Is there fresh water available?	None (1)	(2)	Some (3)	(4)	Ample (5)
Overall rating for meeting animal needs:	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)

Comments:

Visitor Needs

Is the exhibit pleasing to look at?	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)
How is the visibility of the animal(s)?	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)
Is the exhibit safe for the public?	Unsafe (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Safe (5)
How many interpretive elements did you see?	None (1)	(2)	Some (3)	(4)	Many (5)
The interpretive elements were ...	Boring (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Exciting (5)
Is this exhibit accessible to all kinds of people?	No one (1)	(2)	Some (3)	(4)	Everyone (5)
Overall rating for meeting visitor needs:	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)

Comments:

Keeper Needs

Does the exhibit look easy to clean?	Difficult (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Easy (5)
Is it easy to feed the animals?	Difficult (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Easy (5)
Is the exhibit safe for the keeper?	Unsafe (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Safe (5)
Do you see the access door for the keeper?	Not at all (1)	(2)	It's hidden (3)	(4)	Obvious (5)
Do you see a drain system for waste water?	Not at all (1)	(2)	It's hidden (3)	(4)	Obvious (5)
Overall rating for meeting keeper needs:	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)

Comments:

My final rating after reviewing all the needs above:	Poor (1)	(2)	OK (3)	(4)	Excellent (5)
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This exhibit received this rating, because _____
