

## Observation Notation

### OBJECTIVES

The student will observe an animal and design a training program that incorporates the observed behaviors.

### MATERIALS

- pet animals, either at school or home
- Observation Notation* funsheet on page 19 (one per student)
- pencils
- watches

### BACKGROUND

Trainers base animal performances on behaviors that animals frequently exhibit. Animal behaviors usually are adaptations for survival. Walking, breathing, swimming, jumping, flying, eating, and making sounds all are examples of behavior. But it is impossible to expect a dolphin to fly or a parrot to swim. Developing a performance requires observation and accurate records of animal behavior.



### ACTION

1. Have students choose an animal to observe, either at home or in the classroom. This animal must be readily observable and at least a little active. (A hibernating snake is not a good choice.)
2. Use the *Observation Notation* funsheet on the next page to record animal behaviors. Students can use the symbols provided for recording behaviors, create their own symbols, or use a combination of the two. Students should observe an animal in time blocks of at least 15 minutes. (Write in four symbols per hour time block provided on the funsheet.)
3. After observing an animal for a week, have students study its behavior and suggest a training program incorporating the observed behaviors. Could

some activities be extended into new behaviors, such as a dog standing and walking a short distance on its hind legs? Students present their results.



SeaWorld aquarists document shark feeding behavior and food intake.

# Observation Notation

Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Observation dates: \_\_\_\_\_

	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Monday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Tuesday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Wednesday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Thursday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Friday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Saturday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sunday	a.m.	12 midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	p.m.	12 noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

## KEY

<i>symbol</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>symbol</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>symbol</i>	<i>activity</i>
A	eating				
B	sleeping				
C	resting				
D	moving slowly				
E	moving fast				