

LIONS-5th GRADE

Adult lions are tan in color while cubs have black rosettes that disappear as they age. They are the only cats with furry tufts at the end of their tails. Lions are the only cats you can tell from a distance are male or female. Males have long fur around their head and neck which is called a mane. Males weigh 385-450 pounds and are usually larger than females who weigh 250-320 pounds.

Baby lions are called cubs. These cats have up to 6 babies in a litter. Mother lions will share the responsibility of rearing their cubs. Unlike other cats, Lions live in large social groups called "Prides". They share territory and hunt together which helps with survival. Lions roar to locate other pride members and to signal strange male lions to stay away. The roar can be heard by other lions nearly 6 miles away.

Lions are meat eaters. Meat eaters are also called carnivores. Females also called lionesses do most of the hunting although males will hunt if the prey is large. Lions use their powerful jaws to kill prey by biting its neck. Their diet consists of antelope, zebras, wildebeests, buffalo, impalas, wild pigs and other hoofed animals. Some lions will travel to different areas following migratory prey. However, most stay in the same territory all year long.

Lions are from Africa. They live in woodlands and tall grassy areas. They can survive in many different areas but don't live in deserts and rainforests. They are able to jump into trees but tend to be ground dwellers. Even though lions have been called "King of the Jungle" this is not accurate because they don't live in the jungle. A more correct phrase would be "King of Beasts".

Lions are shrinking in numbers for several reasons. Hunting and Habitat loss due to growing human populations are the main reasons for their decline. In captivity lions can live 25-30 years while in the wild their lifespan is 12 years for males and 15-16 for females.

FIFTH GRADE:

1. What physical characteristics improve the lion's chances of survival?
 - a. Mane
 - b. Powerful jaws
 - c. Ability to roar which is heard over long distances
 - d. All of the above
2. What behavioral characteristics improve the lion's chances of survival?