



Animal Tails

Part 1

Teacher Reads We often read about how parts of animal bodies help them—eyes, ears, nose, and teeth. But tails are important too. Many animals have a tail, and they use it for different purposes. Let’s learn about the purposes of some animals’ tails.

Sea **animals** with tails can use the tails
8 to do lots of things. When a fish swishes its tail from
20 side to side, its **body** curves. That helps a fish swim
31 fast in water.

34 Whales have big, firm tails that help the whales
43 burst from the water with a high leap. When they
53 come back down, they make a big splash and stir up
64 the water. Some experts think whales may do this to
74 **communicate** with other whales.

Part 2

Teacher Reads Some animals use their tails as fly swatters, tools that slap at annoying and harmful insects.

78 When bugs get close to **elephants**, it’s not a problem
88 for elephants. These animals have long, thin tails with
97 a thick bunch of fur at the end. They can flip and swirl
110 that tail back and forth so bugs can’t bite or hurt them.

122 An elephant has another use for its tail. When
131 elephants march in a line, each elephant grips
139 another’s tail with its trunk.

144 That way, the elephants
148 stay together. The first
152 elephant in line leads
156 the rest of the herd.



Part 3

Teacher Reads Some animals use their tails to grab things or for balance when they sit.

161 An **opossum** can grab onto things with its tail.

170 An opossum's tail can curl onto a branch to help
180 the opossum. Its tail acts like a fifth leg. It helps the
192 opossum go up a tree and then come back down.

202 A **kangaroo** has a tail that is very strong. It helps
213 the kangaroo leap as far as 30 feet. A kangaroo can
224 lean on its tail to sit down.

231 A tail serves and helps an animal in lots of ways.
242 The next time you see an animal with a tail, ask this:
254 What can the tail do to help the animal? [Learn More](#)

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