



Meerkat Fun Facts!

Meerkats are fascinating creatures. They look very cute and are comical to watch. Meerkats are sociable animals. They live in groups with other meerkats. A group of meerkats is called a mob. There are often around 20 meerkats in a mob. Sometimes there can be up to 50! Would you like to learn more about meerkats? Read on to find out some fun facts!

R – How many meerkats are in a mob?

Where do they live?

Meerkats live in dry, open areas such as the Kalahari Desert. They live in burrows with their mob. Their burrows are very big and quite deep. They have tunnels going off in lots of different directions. A burrow usually has about 15 entrances! In the burrow there are chambers for sleeping and even chambers for going to the toilet! Meerkats don't usually dig their own burrows. They use burrows that have already been made by ground squirrels or mongooses.

R: What do the meerkats have chambers for?

P: Why do you think their tunnels have so many entrances

Fingerprints!

Meerkats might look the same but each one is different. Meerkats have a coat of fur that helps them to blend into their surroundings. Their fur is tan, brown, grey and silver.



Meerkats also have black patches and stripes across their backs. Their stripes are like our fingerprints. They are different on every meerkat!

I: Why are the meerkats' stripes a bit like our fingerprints?

Teamwork!

Have you seen a meerkat standing upright and peering around? They are actually keeping watch. They bark to their mob if they spot any danger. This means that other meerkats in the mob can play and look for food without worrying. Did you know that there is a different alarm call for different dangers?

P: Why might there be different alarm calls to signal different dangers?

Clever creatures!

Meerkats are very intelligent. Scientists studied some meerkats. They found out that meerkats will work together to solve problems. They realised that meerkats learn from their mistakes. They completed a task quicker when they had been successful before.

E: Why might meerkats be considered intelligent?

How long do meerkats live for?

There are many predators of meerkats. This means that there are many animals that enjoy eating meerkats. Meerkats live up to 8 years in the wild. In a zoo, meerkats are looked after. They are not attacked by any predators hoping for a tasty meal. This means that they can live longer. Meerkats in the zoo can live for 14 years. Some have been known to live up to 20 years! Wow!

E: Why do meerkats live longer in captivity?