



Animal coverings

All animal coverings share some similar characteristics:

- Play a role in regulating body temperature
- Act as camouflage making it harder to be seen by predators
- For many species different patterns and colours can be used to help attract mates and confuse predators (zebra stripes)

Fur

Fur or hair is one of the features that are characteristic of mammals.

Did you know?

- Fur is made up of hair
- Whiskers, wool, prickles and spines are all made up of hair
- Some mammals have very little hair such as whales and Rhinos
- Fur is mostly used as an insulator trapping warm air against the skin warming the animal

Feathers


Feathers are one of the features that distinguish birds from other groups of animals


Did you know?

- There are several different types of feathers used for different jobs, such as feathers used just for flight, down feathers used for warmth and contour feathers used to give shape and colour
- Each different type of feather is made up of different parts such as the vane, rachis, barb, after feather, hollow shaft and calamus
- Feathers are used to help waterproof and camouflage birds
- Males are usually more brightly coloured than females

Scales


Did you know?

- Not all fish have scales
 - Those fish that do not have scales are covered in a layer of mucus
 - Scales and mucus provide protection for the fish
 - There are 5 different types of scales (placoid, comoid, ganoid, cycloid, ctenoid)
 - Most fish are usually covered in just one type of scale but some fish can be covered in more
 - The type of scale/s a fish has is adapted to the habitat it lives in
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- Scales vary greatly in size and grow as the fish grows.
 - Scales develop rings that show growth and age just like the rings in a tree trunk

Skin

Did you know?

- Skin is the largest organ
 - Provides protection for the underlying muscles, bones and organs
 - Provides sensation to heat, cold, touch, vibration and pressure
 - Regulates our body temperature by sweating to cool down
 - Skin stretches when the animal moves
 - Is waterproof
 - Acts as a barrier against germs
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Resources for animal coverings

Resource 1: How does an animals covering help it to survive?

Instructions:

Fill in the table below as you walk around the zoo.

For each animal write in the space provided what group the animal belongs to, draw and label a picture of what the animals covering looks like and describe how the animals covering helps that animal to stay alive in its habitat.

Animal	Group it belongs to	Picture of covering	Description of how the covering helps the animal to stay alive in its habitat
Zebra			
Cheetah			
Tuatara			
Giraffe			
Kea			



Animals have different kinds of coverings. See if you can match the animals here with the coverings. Draw a line from the picture to the correct box.



Hair / fur

Scales

Feathers

