

A close-up photograph of two young brown bears in a forest. The bear on the right is leaning towards the bear on the left, with its mouth open as if to lick or nuzzle the other's face. The bears have thick, brown fur and small, dark eyes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat.

Amazing Baby Animals

 **beanstack originals**



Amazing Baby Animals

Get to know some of the cutest, silliest, and most unusual baby animals around!



What is it about baby animals that makes us love them so much? From their big eyes to their silly behavior, we just can't get enough. Get ready to meet adorable, unusual, and downright amazing baby animals!

Gorilla Games

Have you ever played a game of tag? If so, you have something in common with a young gorilla! In fact, you have a lot in common with a gorilla. Gorillas live across parts of central Africa. Both humans and gorillas are a type of animal called a great ape. Like us, gorillas are very smart. They also have hands like ours, with fingers and flexible thumbs. However, gorillas are much bigger than humans—and much stronger, too!

Baby gorillas are not as big. When they are born, gorillas only weigh about 4.5 pounds (2 kg). That's less than many newborn human babies weigh. But baby gorillas grow much faster than human babies do. By the time a gorilla is 12 years old, it might weigh as much as 500 pounds (226.8 kg)! That's as much as a female polar bear weighs!

Even though young gorillas grow fast, they are not all that different from human children. Like kids, young gorillas love to play! Growing gorillas often play by chasing each other in a game almost like tag. And when they're tired? Baby gorillas love to cuddle.



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During the nighttime, young gorillas snuggle with their moms in trees or in grassy nests on the ground.



A fluffy polar bear cub peers out of a snowbank.

Cute Cubs

It's a freezing day in the Arctic, and there's no sign of any animals. But wait—whose head is peeking out of the snow? It's a polar bear! Polar bears live at the north of the planet, in a place called the Arctic. This area is very cold, but polar bears stay warm thanks to their thick fur. They also have a layer of fat that helps keep them toasty. This is known as blubber.

Once a year, female polar bears dig cave homes, called dens, into the snow. Then, in winter, they give birth inside their dens—usually to twins! These baby polar bears are called cubs. In the spring, the polar bear mom brings her new cubs out into the world for the first time. She teaches her cubs how to hunt for meals like seals. And the cubs spend a lot of time playing! Polar bear cubs often play by wrestling each other. Other times, they slide down snowy hills—almost like sledding. Adorable!

FUN FACT

A polar bear's tongue can be blue, purple, or black.



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A growing baby African elephant practices trumpeting with its trunk.

Silly Elephants

Meet the African elephant: the world's largest land animal. Found across much of Africa, these elephants are famous for their large, flapping ears. These big ears help elephants hear sounds over long

distances and stay cool in hot weather. Elephants are also famous for their two long, curved teeth, called tusks. They use their tusks to collect food and protect themselves.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than 40,000 muscles in an elephant's trunk. That's more than six times the number of muscles in the whole human body!

But elephants are probably most famous for their trunks!

Elephants use their trunks for many important things. Trunks let elephants drink water or spray water over themselves to cool off. Trunks also help elephants communicate by making loud trumpeting sounds. Sometimes, elephants can even use their trunks as a snorkel while swimming.

For baby elephants, however, trunks can be a little tricky! Baby elephants, called calves, are able to walk just one hour after being born. But it takes them much longer to learn to control their trunks. In fact, some calves have even been known to accidentally trip over their trunks! Some elephant calves even suck on the tips of their trunks, almost like a human child sucking on their thumb.



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A sleek brown platypus swims in a creek.

Meet the Puggle

What has a bill like a duck, a tail like a beaver, and a body like an otter? No, it's not the start of a joke—it's a platypus! The platypus is a type of mammal that lives across parts of Australia. A mammal is a type of animal with certain shared features, or characteristics. Mammals breathe air. They have a skeleton inside their body, including a backbone. And they grow hair (or fur). This means that animals like elephants, polar bears, and gorillas are all mammals. And humans are mammals, too! Like other mammals, platypuses breathe air, grow hair, and have a skeleton. They also raise their young by feeding them milk. However, unlike most mammals, baby platypuses hatch from eggs!

On top of being unusual animals, baby platypuses also have an unusual name: they are called puggles. Puggles are born inside an underground home called a burrow. There, the mother platypus lays her eggs. After hatching, puggles nurse on their mother's milk. After about four months, the babies are able to swim. Are puggles unusual? Yes—but they are also unusually adorable!