



Mammals March Madness (MMM) for the Younger Crowd (K-5)

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Welcome to Mammals March Madness! Younger kids can (and should) absolutely participate in filling out a bracket and play along. While older students can dive deep into the research of the hunting habits of apex predators or learn about the environmental adaptation of desert animals, younger students may simply pick their bracket based on nothing more than seeing a picture of the animal. This can still be a great discovery experience for the students to learn the names of animals they never knew existed (the hagfish!) or learn the differences between herbivore, omnivore, and carnivore.

The Rules of the MMM Game Universe: Review [the slide show for introducing MMM](#) to learners and first-time players to MMM here, it explains how the game is played in detail.

PICKING YOUR WINNERS:

While spending time learning about animals can help fill out the bracket, there are [elements of chance in the match-ups](#). Picking outcomes can often be a mix of gut feelings, preferences for the cute animal, and research. And upsets can and do happen- for example the #3 seed Quokka (in this case the cute one) went off searching for food leaving the #14 seed Numbat on the field to advance to the next round. Few could have predicted that outcome except someone with the confidence of a kid in a superhero tee-shirt. While it would be hard to get 3rd graders to fill out a table on mammal body size and tooth types, they love to fill out the “who do you think wins?” brackets (and probably learn more while doing it!). Children as young as 3 have filled out brackets just based on photos of the competitors. Animal battles, fun for the whole family!

To help support research by younger players, we've added some key resources:
[2024 Combatant Info Slides](#)

- Picture of animal
- Traits useful for “battle”
- Biome
- Diet
- Food Chain Position
- Relative size compared to kids and adults

- JUMBO BRACKET with more writing space printed across 5 sheets of paper.

DURING THE TOURNAMENT & FINDING OUT RESULTS:

You know what kids love? Weird animal facts. MMM is full of weird animal facts. Did you know a male platypus is venomous but only for part of the year? There is a fact that will come up the next time you watch Phineas and Ferb... While rarely the battles can get a bit... ah... gruesome (Katie shouting from out of frame “THAT’S ACCURACY!”), unless the students are actively reading the Twitter battles, these scenarios can be glossed over by teachers and parents when kids are told the results the next day. Getting the results can happen in 3 ways:

- Follow the action “live” on Twitter tournament nights by following @MMMlets go on Twitter
- [Watch MC Marmot](#) the next morning, that critter is adorable
- Check the 2024 Read All About It, sports summaries posted at the [ASU March Mammal Madness LibGuide](#). There will also be a link to the play-by-play for every battle detail.

SOME MORE PRO-TIPS:

- Have fun!
- Print the JUMBO bracket- all 5 parts (print extra for the inevitable spills, rips or getting lost. Did my 2018 half filled bracket turn up as a bookmark a year later? Maaaybe...)
- Do not expect to fill out the bracket in one sitting especially with younger ones (or older ones). Don’t even expect to do a whole Round 1 division in one sitting.
 - a. If kiddo only fills out one division they can cheer hard for that division
 - b. Have kiddos fill out the bracket one round at a time, and then they can make predictions from the winners for the next round- this helps them stay engaged even if many of their first round picks didn’t make it to Round 2.
 - c. Did they not fill out a bracket at all? That is okay too, they can still follow along and hear the outcomes. Give that kiddo the bracket when it is down to eight competitors
- The Champion has most often been a #1 seed, while many upsets happen it probably will be a good bet to coax the student to pick a higher ranked animal as ultimate champion. But heads up, in the last few years, worse seeds have made it to the Championship.
- Don’t stay up late on Twitter watching the battle, the results will be posted the next day. The early rounds last a long time, it will be a late night. You can wear your lucky hat to bed dreaming of a African Wild Dog victory, but it won’t change the outcome, get your sleep.

- Drink water, that isn't important to MMM but you probably didn't drink enough today
- Have fun! (So important it is listed twice) The tournament is not about the points accumulated or how many animals kids correctly picked to advance. The MMM motto is "If you're learning, you're winning" and just looking at these different animals and seeing the incredible diversity of life is a big thing to learn, so it's a very big win. Some of the specific animal details may become vague or lost to time, but parents write to tell us about their kids recognizing combatant animals on TV programs, at zoos, or the books they gravitate on the next trip to the library.
- If a Little's Champion has lost in Round 1 or Round 2, on the evening of March 25th you can download the "Busted Bracketeers" bracket from the LibGuide that allows a reset at the Sweet 16. This way, now that Littles understand how the tournament works they can redo the rest of their bracket starting at the Sweet 16.

HAPPY BRACKETING!!!

