Wolf Postures

Introduction:
This activity introduces students to wolf body postures/communication and animal observation.

This activity could be done before or after playing *WolfQuest*.

Objectives:
At the end of this activity, the student will:
1. Use observation skills successfully.
2. Identify and interpret wolf body postures.

Procedure:
1. Introduce with students the term body language/ non-verbal communication. Ask students about ways that dogs use non-verbal communication to show their emotions.
2. Have students cut out and assemble the articulated wolf model form using the brass fasteners (a class set of wolf models could be made and used in all classes).
3. Using the wolf tail and body and posture diagrams, have students mimic these postures using their wolf model.
4. Visit a zoo, wildlife area or view a video to observe wolf behavior.
5. Have students record the different body postures observed.
6. Students can list the letter abbreviations for each body posture and tally the types of behaviors they observe.
7. Lesson summary and/or class discussions can include:
    1) Discuss what behaviors were easy to identify, which were difficult to identify what behaviors were observed most frequently.
    2). Have students list 3 questions they have about wolf behavior.

Videos:
Wolves (IMAX)
White Wolf (National Geographic)
A Legend Returns to Yellowstone (National Geographic)
Wolves at Our Door (Discovery School)

National Science Content Standards:

History and Nature of Science
- Nature of science

Life Science Standard
- Regulation and Behavior

Vocabulary:
Animal Behavior
Ethogram

Links:
- Wolf communication images www.lioncrusher.com/animal.asp?animal=35&page=3
- Electronic Field Trip http://www.windosintowonderland.org/wolves/teachers/index.htm

Materials:
- Brass fasteners (12 per student)
- Pattern sheets with wolf parts (card stock paper)
- Wolf tail and body postures diagrams (class set)

Tail Postures

This high tail position indicated the wolf is the dominant wolf, most likely an alpha male or female (the ones that lead the pack).

This horizontal stiffly held tail position indicated the wolf is going to attack or is hunting.

The wagging of a wolf's tail in this manner indicates that the wolf is relaxed.

This somewhat drooped tail position indicated the wolf is relatively relaxed.

This drooped tail position indicated the wolf is even more relaxed.

This half tail tuck along with a partially arched back indicated that a wolf is humbling itself to a more dominant wolf and is a form of submission.

This fully tucked tail along with a highly arched back shows that a wolf is extremely in fear of something (a more dominant wolf) and is another form of submission.

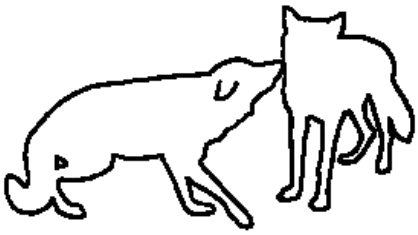
Body Postures

This body position is of a wolf when it is attacking. **(AP)**

This body position is of a wolf when it is defensive or is feeling threatened. **(DTP)**

This body position is of wolves fighting with the top wolf pinning the other wolf to the ground. **(FP)**

The body position of the wolf laying down is an example of a wolf being passive submissive. **(PSP)**

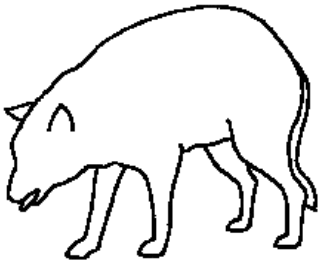


The wolf on the left side of this illustration demonstrates the way a wolf looks when it is in active submission. **(ASP)**

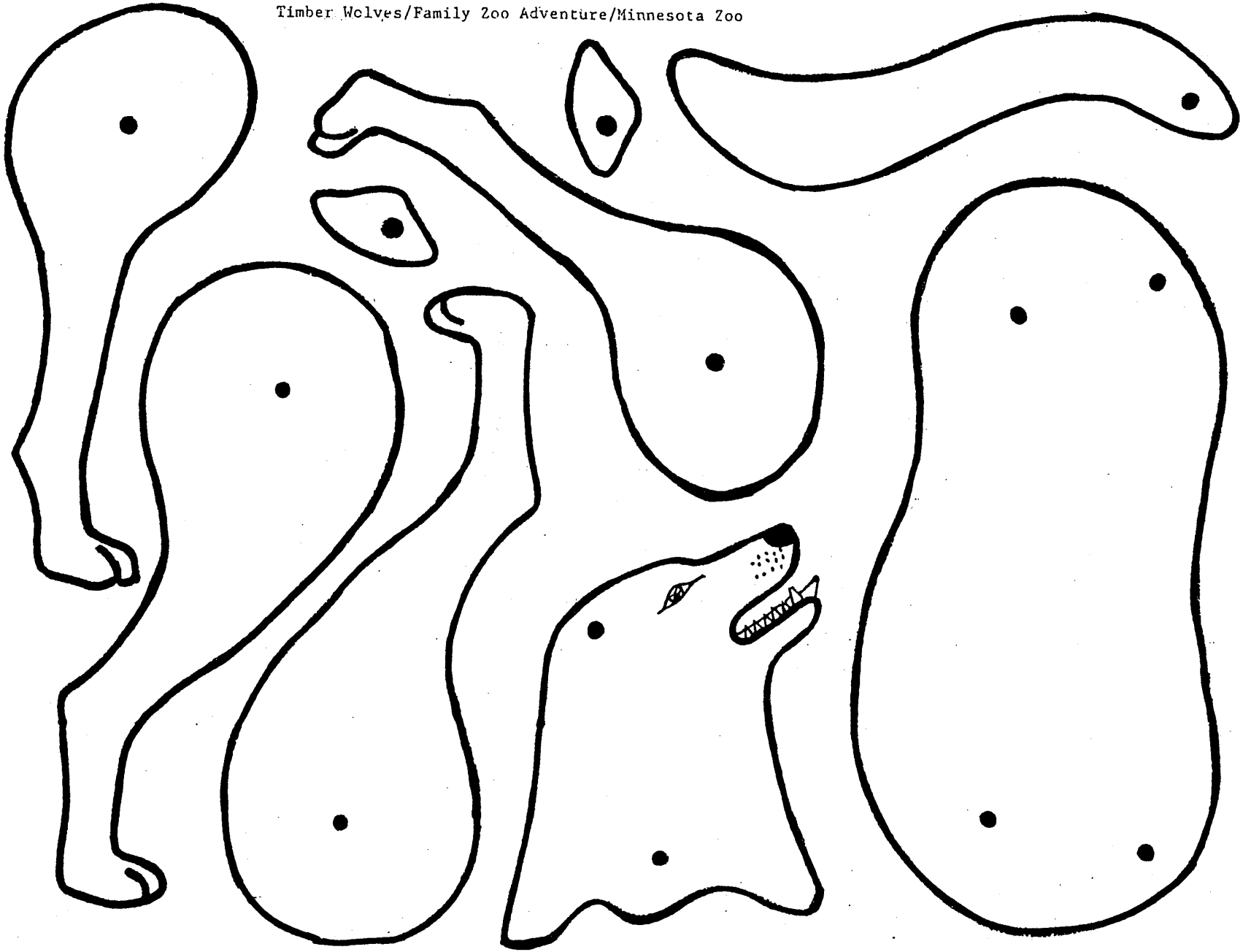
This type body position when running indicates that the wolf is playing. **(PP)**

This wolf is simply playing. **(PP)**

This type body position when running indicates that the wolf is running in fear. **(FP)**



This body posture indicates that the wolf is feeling both fear and aggressiveness. **(FAP)**

This shows how a yearling would submit to a fully dominant wolf. **(YSP)**

Timber Wolves/Family Zoo Adventure/Minnesota Zoo