

# Meerkats

Meerkats are animals that belong to the mongoose family. They live in Africa and are known for their teamwork. Meerkats are mammals, which means they have fur and give birth to live babies. Baby meerkats are called pups.

## What Do Meerkats Look Like?

Meerkats can grow to around 30cm tall. Their tails can be 20cm long. They have fur which, is a mixture of yellow, brown and grey and they. Sometimes, they have black spots. Meerkats have black rings around their eyes. This helps shield their eyes from the hot desert sun – a bit like a pair of sunglasses! Meerkats have long, sharp claws, which help them dig and climb.



## Where Do Meerkats Live?

Meerkats live in grassland in deserts in southern Africa. They live in underground tunnels called burrows. These burrows can be 5m long and have lots of different entrances and rooms. Meerkats are social animals and like to be together in family groups of usually around 20 members. To get warm after a cool night, meerkats will lie on their back in the desert sun.



## What Do Meerkats Eat?

Meerkats are omnivores, which means they eat meat and plants. Things they eat include beetles, caterpillars, spiders, eggs and fruit.

## How Do Meerkats Protect Themselves?

Meerkats have very good eyesight, which helps them to spot predators (animals which try to catch them) from up to 300m away. A group of meerkats have one member who stands guard to watch for predators. If there is danger, the guard will bark or whistle to warn the others. If caught by a predator, a meerkat will try to make itself look scary by showing its teeth and claws.