

# Amazing Cheetahs: A 5-7 Day Adventure for Ily!

Welcome to an exciting week all about cheetahs! Get ready to learn, create, and explore the world of these incredible animals.

## Materials Needed for the Unit:

- Age-appropriate books about cheetahs
- Laptop or tablet with internet access (for videos and research)
- Printer (optional, for worksheets or printable activities)
- Plain and lined paper
- Construction paper (various colors)
- Pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick or liquid glue
- A world map or globe
- Optional: Modeling clay, pipe cleaners, felt, yarn, paper plates for crafts
- Optional: Stopwatch for speed activities

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## Day 1: Meet the Marvelous Cheetah!

### Focus: Introduction, Basic Facts, Habitat

1. **Cheetah Welcome (15-20 mins):** Watch an engaging introductory video about cheetahs. Search for "National Geographic Kids cheetah" or "SciShow Kids cheetah" for good options. Discuss what makes cheetahs exciting.
2. **Reading Time (20-30 mins):** Read a book about cheetahs together. Focus on general facts: what they look like, where they live, that they are mammals and carnivores.
3. **Activity - My Cheetah Profile (30-40 mins):** On a piece of paper, have Ily draw a large cheetah. Then, label basic parts (head, body, legs, tail, spots). Around the drawing, write down 3-5 new and interesting facts learned today.
4. **Geography - Cheetah Homes (15-20 mins):** Using a world map or globe, find Africa and any parts of the Middle East where cheetahs live. Talk about the types of environments they prefer (grasslands, savannas).

**Optional Extension:** Start a "Cheetah Fact Journal" where Ily can write down one new fact each day.

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## Day 2: Built for Speed!

### Focus: Anatomy and Adaptations for Speed

1. **Speedy Discussion (10-15 mins):** Ask Ily: "What makes cheetahs the fastest land animals?" Brainstorm ideas together.
2. **Research & Learn (20-30 mins):** Research cheetah adaptations for speed. Focus on:
  - Flexible spine
  - Lightweight body
  - Non-retractable claws (for grip like cleats)
  - Long tail (for balance during turns)

- Large nostrils and lungs (for oxygen intake)

Find simple explanations or short video clips for each.

3. **Activity - Cheetah Moves! (15-20 mins):** In a safe, open space, try some 'cheetah moves.' For example: a long stretch (flexible spine), trying to 'steer' with an arm acting as a tail while 'running' in slow motion. Discuss how these body parts help. *Optional:* If you have a stopwatch, time Ily running a short distance and then discuss how cheetahs are SO much faster.
4. **Craft - Speedy Cheetah Craft (30-45 mins):** Make a cheetah craft. Ideas: A paper plate cheetah face, a cheetah puppet using a paper bag, or a simple cheetah model from construction paper or modeling clay. Emphasize adding spots and perhaps a long tail.

**Optional Extension:** Compare a cheetah's running style to other animals (e.g., a dog, a horse) by watching short videos.

## Day 3: Hunter on the Plains

### Focus: Diet, Hunting Strategies, Ecosystem Role

1. **Predator & Prey (20-30 mins):** Read or watch videos about what cheetahs eat (e.g., gazelles, impalas, young wildebeest, hares) and how they hunt. Focus on the stalk, the short, incredibly fast chase, and how they trip their prey. Keep content age-appropriate, emphasizing skill and survival.
2. **Activity - Food Web Fun (20-30 mins):** Create a simple food web or food chain. Draw pictures or write names of plants -> cheetah prey -> cheetah. Discuss the cheetah's role as a carnivore and predator.
3. **Creative Writing - A Cheetah's Day (30-45 mins):** Ily writes a short story from the perspective of a cheetah. It could be about learning to hunt, playing with siblings, or a day out on the savanna. Encourage descriptive words.

**Optional Extension:** Research one of the cheetah's prey animals and learn a few facts about it.

## Day 4: Cheetah Families & Communication

### Focus: Cubs, Social Life, Sounds

1. **Cheetah Families (20-30 mins):** Read or learn about cheetah mothers and their cubs. How many cubs are usually in a litter? How long do they stay with their mother? What important skills do they learn from her? Discuss that male cheetahs sometimes live in small groups (coalitions), while females are usually solitary with their cubs.
2. **Watch & Observe (15-20 mins):** Find videos of cheetah mothers with their cubs or cheetahs interacting. Look for playing, grooming, and learning behaviors.
3. **Activity - Cub's First Year (30-40 mins):** Create a simple timeline or a few drawings showing a cheetah cub's life in its first year (e.g., born blind, learning to walk, starting to follow mom, learning to hunt).
4. **Listen Up! (10-15 mins):** Search for cheetah sounds online (chirps, purrs, hisses, bleats). Listen to them and discuss what Ily thinks they might mean in different situations. Cheetahs don't roar like lions!

**Optional Extension:** Draw a picture of a mother cheetah with her cubs in their den or on the savanna.

## Day 5: Protecting Our Speedy Friends

### Focus: Threats and Conservation

1. **Challenges for Cheetahs (20-30 mins):** Discuss why cheetahs are vulnerable or endangered. Main threats include:
  - Habitat loss (farms, settlements taking over their land)
  - Conflict with humans (farmers protecting livestock)
  - Poaching and illegal trade
  - Loss of prey
2. **Conservation Champions (20-30 mins):** Research a cheetah conservation organization (e.g., Cheetah Conservation Fund, WWF). What kind of work do they do to help cheetahs? (e.g., research, education, working with farmers, rescue and rehabilitation).
3. **Activity - Save the Cheetahs! Poster (30-45 mins):** Ily creates a poster to raise awareness about cheetah conservation. The poster can include drawings of cheetahs, key facts, why they need help, and a simple message like "Help Save the Cheetahs!"
4. **Unit Wrap-Up & Reflection (15-20 mins):** Discuss what Ily's favorite part of the cheetah unit was. What was the most surprising thing learned? Review some key facts. Share the poster with family.

### Optional Extension Activities for Day 6 or 7 (or if you want to dive deeper):

- **Cheetah Diorama:** Create a shoebox diorama of a cheetah's savanna habitat. Include a cheetah, prey animals, and appropriate plants.
- **Comparative Study:** Choose another big cat (like a lion or leopard) and create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting it with the cheetah.
- **Conservation Hero:** Research a person involved in cheetah conservation (like Dr. Laurie Marker) and write a short biography about them.
- **Cheetah Art Gallery:** Spend a day doing different types of cheetah art - painting, collage, sculpture with clay.
- **Storytelling:** Write and illustrate a longer story or a comic book about a cheetah adventure.
- **Cheetah Quiz Show:** Create questions about cheetahs based on the week's learning and have a fun family quiz show!

Enjoy your cheetah adventure, Ily!