

Gestation periods

Outstanding Science Year 5 - Animals, including humans - OS5B002

National Curriculum Statutory Requirements

5B1 - describe the changes as humans develop to old age; **UKS2W3** - recording data and results of increasing complexity using scientific diagrams and labels, classification keys, tables, scatter graphs, bar and line graphs

Learning Objective

I can compare the gestation periods of different mammals.



Me:   

Teacher:   

Gestation

Nearly all mammals are **viviparous**. This means that they give birth to **live young**, rather than laying eggs. The time between the **fertilisation** of the **egg cell** by the **sperm cell** and the birth of the offspring is called the **gestation period**.



During the gestation period, the offspring develops inside the mother's **womb**. It starts off as a **zygote** (a single cell made from the union of a female egg cell and a male sperm cell) and then develops into an **embryo** composed of many cells. As time goes on, the embryo becomes a **foetus**, with more recognisable features such as skin, bones, blood and organs. The fully-developed **baby** exits the mother's body at the end of the gestation period. Gestation periods are different for different mammals.

Activity

Look at the table on the right. Use your maths skills to round the gestation period of each animal to the **nearest 10 days**. Next, use this rounded figure to complete the bar chart.

Table showing the gestation periods of different mammals

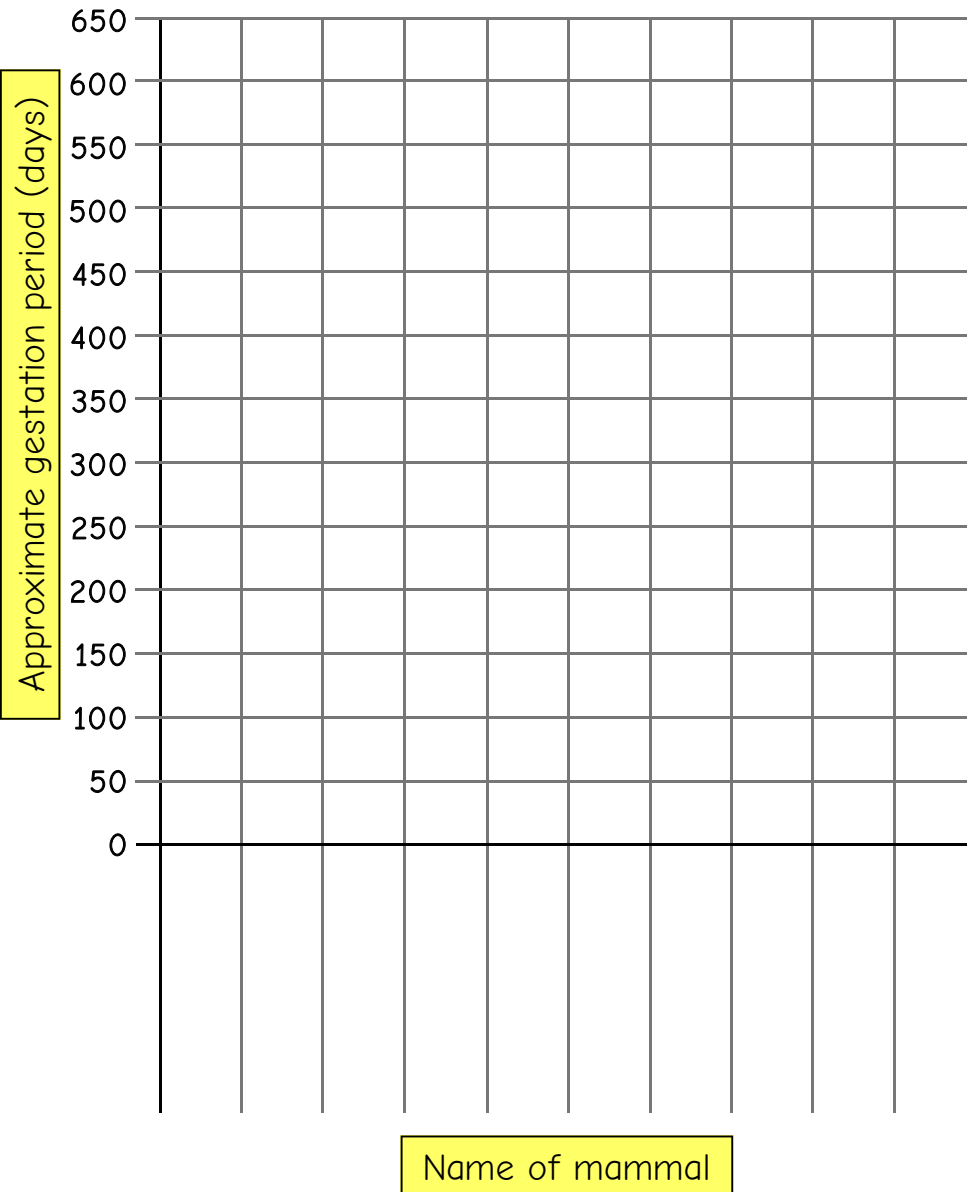
Name of animal	Gestation period (days)	Approximate gestation period (days)
Cat	63	
Dog	63	
Elephant	624	
Hippopotamus	240	
Horse	336	
Human	275	
Pig	115	
Rabbit	31	
Rat	21	
Whale	446	

Discussion

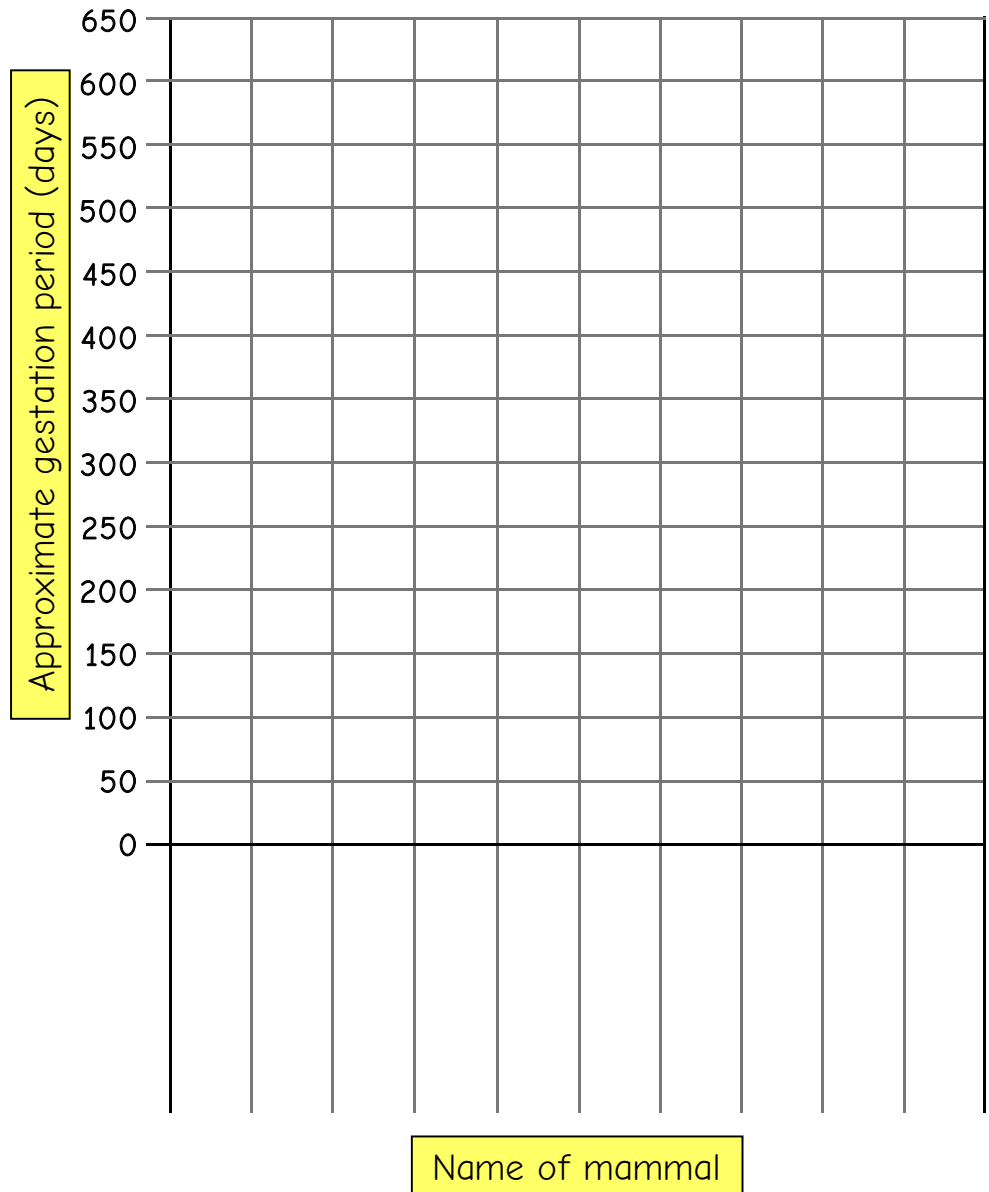
Did you notice any patterns?

Which animal has the longest gestation period? Why do you think this is?

Bar chart showing the approximate gestation periods of different mammals



Bar chart showing the approximate gestation periods of different mammals



Teacher's note - this page contains a bar chart frame sufficient for two children, to save on printing and photocopying costs.