

Acting Like Animals

Does it sometimes feel like a zoo in your class? You're in luck! These yoga poses show kids we have lots to learn from our animal pals.

Instructions

1 Tell students that a long time ago (in the 8th century!), yoga practitioners developed yoga poses called "asanas." It's said these ancient yogis found imitating animals to be an uplifting and enlightening experience. That is why so many of the poses we do today are modeled after animals. To name a few: Downward Dog, Butterfly, Lion, Fish, Cat, Cow, Pigeon, and Horse. It seems these first yogis were on to something. We do have much to learn from animals:

- **Lions** can teach us about bravery.
- **Dogs** live in the moment and never hold grudges.
- **Cats** show us it's OK to look out for ourselves.
- **Bees** teach us how to work together and form communities.
- **Butterflies** are open to change.

2 Ask students to give examples of something they've learned from an animal or pet. Maybe their pet dog taught them how to snuggle or their pet fish taught them about responsibility.

3 Download and print the activity sheet Draw Your Spirit Animal at scholastic.com/yogaintheclassroom. Ask students to think of an animal that they feel reflects their personality, or an animal that has attributes they'd like to have. Then have them pretend that they are an ancient yogi and

make up a yoga pose to represent their animal on their own! Let them be creative.

4 Ask a few volunteers to demonstrate their poses for the class. Have everyone hold each pose for three breaths. Next, have students draw their animals on the activity sheet. They can write words around their drawing that show the attributes they have in common (or would like to have in common) with the animal they drew.

3 EASY POSES TO TRY IN CLASS

Butterfly

Sit on the floor and bring the soles of your feet together. Let your knees fall out to either side. Imagine your knees are the wings of a butterfly. Gently "flap" your wings as you breathe in through your nose and out your mouth.

Cat

Come to the floor on your hands and knees. Breathe in through your nose, then exhale as you round your spine like a Halloween cat.

Lion

Come to the floor on your knees, then sit onto your heels. Breathe in as you hug your arms into your body, squeeze your hands into fists, and scrunch your face. Now "roar" like a lion as you release your breath, stretch your arms out, and open your mouth wide.

Objective

Students will learn key SEL skills such as social awareness and empathy.

Time

45 minutes (without poses)

Materials

- Draw Your Spirit Animal activity sheet (available at scholastic.com/yogaintheclassroom)
- Crayons

