

# Learning Guide to Accompany **Skunks**

The Children's Hour radio show podcast  
<https://www.childrenshour.org/skunks/>



**Spotted Skunk warning a predator with a handstand**

## About Us

The Children’s Hour Inc is a New Mexico-based non-profit organization that produces an award-winning children’s radio program that is educational, entertaining, and engaging, and includes kids who participate in its creation. The program is internationally syndicated broadcasting on more than 115 public radio stations worldwide. Program themes focus on civics, STEM, culture, and music education, featuring New Mexico children as co-hosts and lead interviewers. Katie Stone has been the executive producer of *The Children’s Hour* for 20 years.

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## Tell us about you!

We at the Children’s Hour would like to know:

1. How old are you?
2. Was this your first time listening to a radio show or podcast for kids?
3. Was this radio show less fun or more fun compared to other things you do for fun, like playing video games or watching TV?  
 Less fun       More fun
4. Would you listen to a radio show again if you could?
5. Of everything you heard in the radio show, what will you remember most?

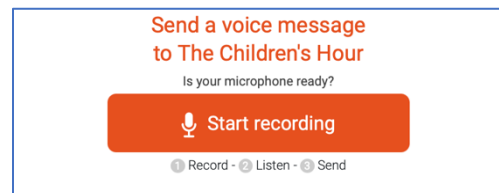
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If you would like to draw a picture about anything you learned on the radio show, you can do so below, or on a blank page. Scan and email it to us, and we may display it on our online pages.

If you would like to tell the creators of this radio show something in your own voice, you can send a voice message to *The Children’s Hour* here: <https://www.childrenshour.org>. Look for the orange button and click to record.



## Read and Color

**Striped skunks** have a white "V" down the back and a white bar between the eyes running from the forehead to the middle of the rostrum (snout).

**Hooded skunks** have three typical color patterns: 1) two thin stripes running down the side of the body from the shoulder to the stomach, 2) a single stripe running down the back from the forehead to the tail – the single white stripe is interspersed with black hair giving a gray appearance, or 3) a combination of both those patterns. These skunks also have a white bar between the eyes.

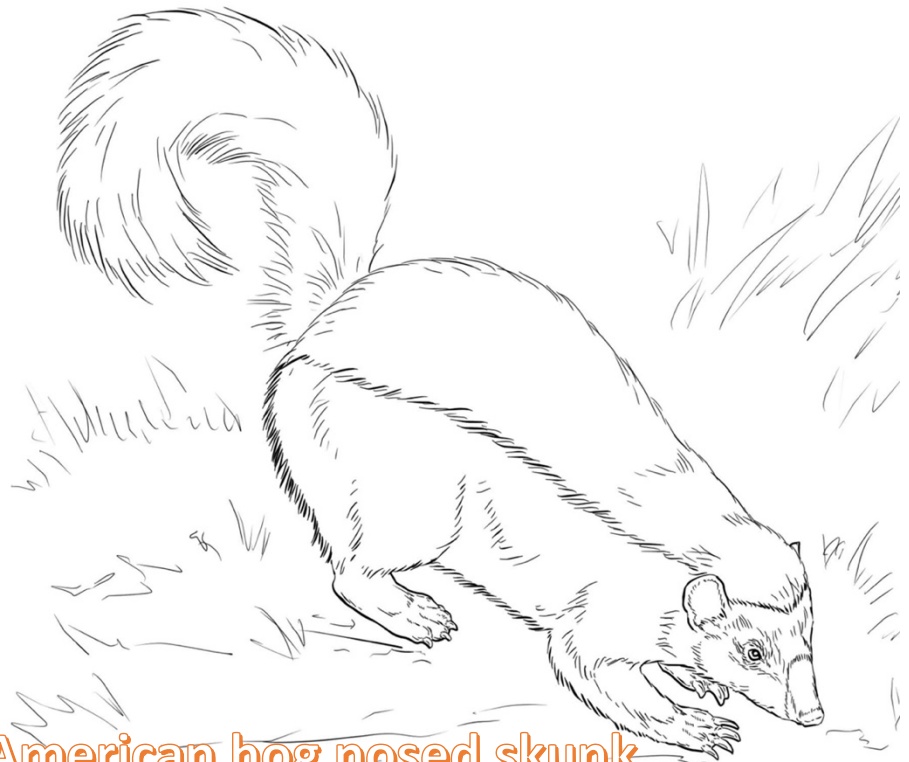
**Spotted skunks** are not truly spotted, but have a series of stripes, which are interrupted, running down the back and sides of the animal.

**Hog-nosed skunks** in the United States and northern Mexico have a single solid (no black hairs) white stripe down the back, which starts at the top of the head and can range from a thin stripe that stops just past the shoulder blades to an extremely wide stripe continuing to the tail and covering the entire back and most of the side of the animal. The hog-nosed skunks of Central and South America have a double stripe in the "V" pattern seen in North American striped skunks. These skunks do not have any markings between the eyes.

**Stink badgers** bear a slight resemblance to North American hog-nosed skunks. The white stripes down the back can be divided, single and narrow, or absent.



North American striped skunk

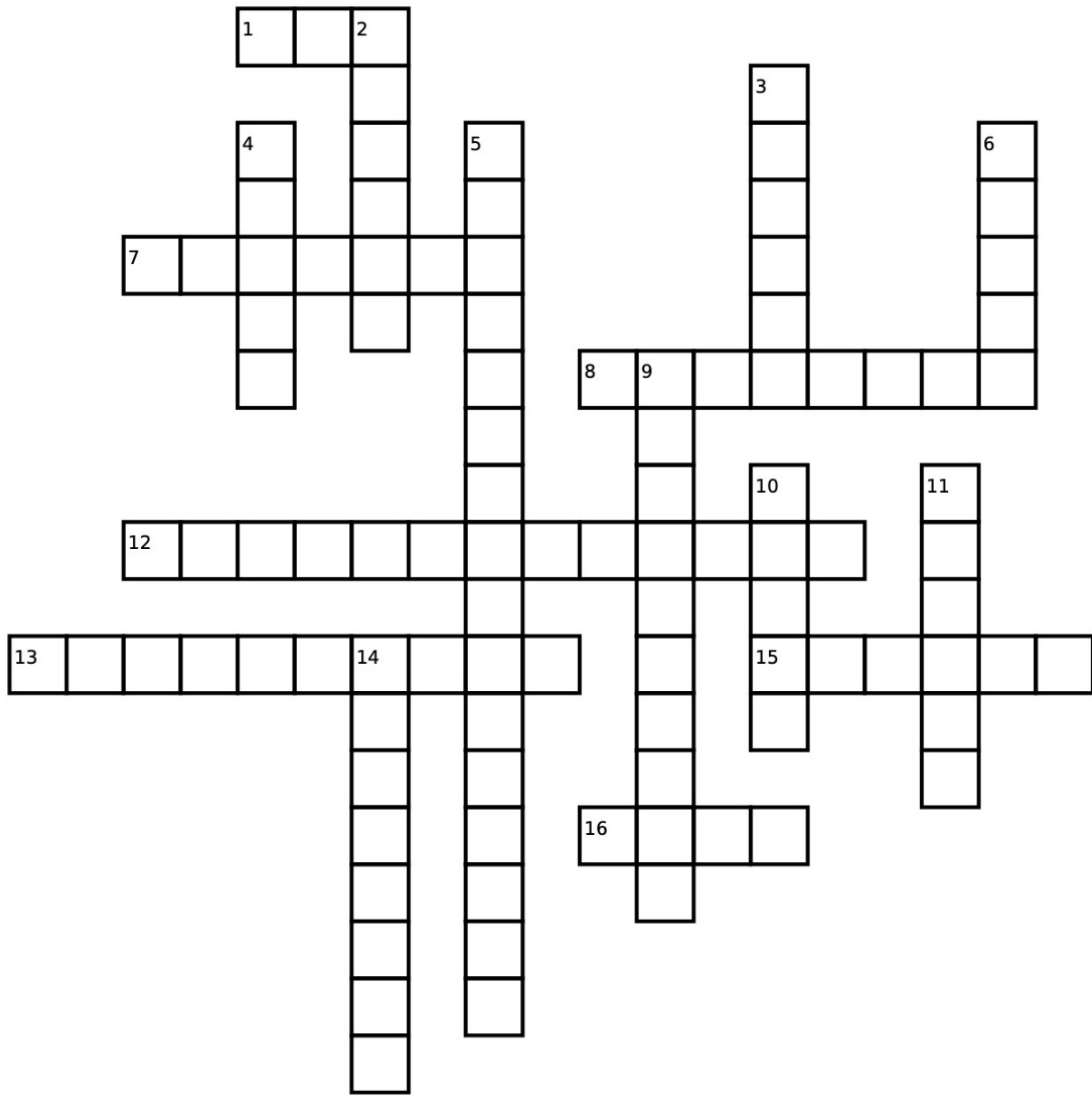


American hog nosed skunk

## Crossword: Skunk Vocabulary

In this episode, a lot of technical language was used to describe skunks. Maybe some of these words were new to you. Let's have fun and use a puzzle to recall some of them:

*"What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself."  
— Abraham Lincoln*



(See next page for clues.)

## Across

1. A baby skunk is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ skunk does a handstand to tell predators to back off.
8. Today skunks can be found in the \_\_\_\_\_, and they (stink badgers) can also be found on Palawan and Calamian islands as well as Java, Borneo, Sumatra and neighboring islands.
12. the basic color of skunks
13. All \_\_\_\_\_ have anal scent glands, but those glands are extremely well developed in skunks.
15. the special structure on the skunk's anal gland that allows it to aim its spray
16. When the skunks aim their spray, they aim for the \_\_\_\_\_.

## Down

2. \_\_\_\_\_ juice doesn't remove the odor of the skunk spray, but it can trick your nose to cover skunk odor temporarily.
3. The chemicals in skunk spray are different among skunk species, but all contain some kind of \_\_\_\_\_ compounds.
4. If a skunk is being chased by a predator, the skunk releases a \_\_\_\_\_ of spray, that the predator runs through.
5. A recipe for washing off skunk spray is a mixture of \_\_\_\_\_ and shampoo.
6. Skunks can be beneficial to humans in that they eat a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. the family name of skunks derived from the genus *Mephitis*, which is Latin for "bad odor"
10. \_\_\_\_\_ badgers had been included with other badgers in the weasel family, but recent data show that they belong in the skunk family.
11. when a skunk's metabolism slows down and it sleeps for more than two weeks
14. an organism (like a skunk) that eats a variety of other organisms, including plants, animals, and fungi

## Where can I find out more about skunks?

- Dragoo Institute for the Betterment of Skunks and Skunk Reputations: <http://dragoo.org>
- National Geographic Kids: Skunks  
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/skunk>
- How to Draw a Skunk: <http://www.supercoloring.com/drawing-tutorials/how-to-draw-a-skunk>
- Animal Diversity Web: *Mephitis mephitis* striped skunk  
[https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Mephitis\\_mephitis/](https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Mephitis_mephitis/)
- Is That Skunk? - a PBS documentary (Nature S27 Ep6) <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/is-that-skunk-introduction/4514/>

## Hunt for Lyrics

There are so many wonderful songs about skunks in this episode. Below are just a few memorable lyrics from 5 of the songs. Can you match the lyric to the song it comes from? Draw a line from the lyric on the left to the song title on the right.



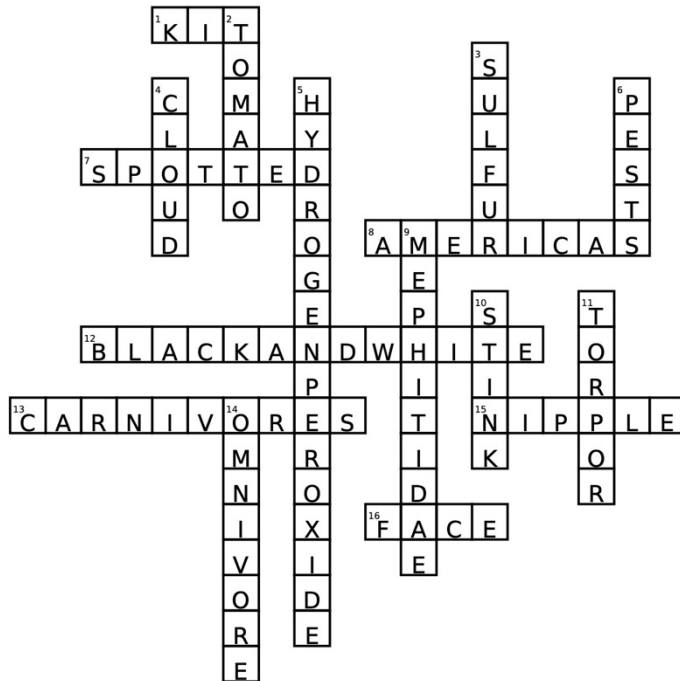
### Lyrics

- “Anything I would I do do do do do to make a pee-ew ew ew ew pee-ew. It doesn't make sense I can't dispense, at any expense. Can't present any scent for self-defense. Oh, the suspense! I get so tense!”
- “Lifting up your tail so high, you're so stinky you make me cry”
- “Now he has a new car, that Mickey the Mouse. It has a powerful motor. He passed me by and yelled, 'Hey, guy, you have a powerful odor!’”
- “Sometimes you stink at what you're trying. And sometimes you're lower than the ground. Sometimes you stink at even stinking. But sometimes your friends are all around.”
- “Who dresses up to lunch and sup in a black and white striped suit? Is it a zebra? No, no, no. Is it a penguin? Uh, uh, uh. Well, if he lifts his tail, you better up and hit the trail 'cuz he's a skunk.”

### Songs (in order of play)

1. ***Stinkle Stinkle Little Skunky*** by Lucas Miller
2. ***Skunk*** by David Polansky
3. ***What's Not to Love About a Skunk?*** by Joe McDermott
4. ***The Skunk Says Funk*** by Brent Lewis
5. ***Little Skunk's Hole*** by The Kiboomers
6. ***Stinker the Skunk*** by Beth Jean
7. ***Skunk Funk*** by The Brecker Brothers
8. ***You're Not the Boss of Me*** by Bill Harley
9. ***Skunk*** by Artichoke
10. ***Algo Rhythm Natural*** by Podington Bear
11. ***Stinky, I Love You*** by Parry Gripp
12. ***The Skunk Song*** by Cab Calloway

## Answer Keys



*"If criticism had any power to harm,  
the skunk would be extinct by  
now."*

—Fred Allen

<u>Lyrics</u>	<u>Songs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Anything I would I do do do do do to make a pee-ew ew ew ew pee-ew. It doesn't make sense I can't dispense, at any expense. Can't present any scent for self-defense. Oh, the suspense! I get so tense!"</li> </ul>	<b>Stinker the Skunk</b> by Beth Jean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Lifting up your tail so high, you're so stinky you make me cry"</li> </ul>	<b>Stinkle Stinkle Little Skunky</b> by Lucas Miller
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Now he has a new car, that Mickey the Mouse. It has a powerful motor. He passed me by and yelled, 'Hey, guy, you have a powerful odor!'"</li> </ul>	<b>The Skunk Song</b> by Cab Calloway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Sometimes you stink at what you're trying. And sometimes you're lower than the ground. Sometimes you stink at even stinking. But sometimes your friends are all around."</li> </ul>	<b>Skunk</b> by Artichoke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Who dresses up to lunch and sup in a black and white striped suit? Is it a zebra? No, no no. Is it a penguin? Uh, uh, uh. Well, if he lifts his tail, you better up and hit the trail 'cuz he's a skunk."</li> </ul>	<b>Skunk</b> by David Polansky

## Connect to Curriculum

<https://www.nextgenscience.org>

Information/Activity	Core Idea	National Standard
<p>Crossword Puzzle (p.4, 5):</p> <p>All carnivores have anal scent glands, but those glands are extremely well developed in skunks.</p> <p>The nipple is a special structure on the skunk’s anal gland that allows it to aim its spray; when the skunks aim their spray, they aim for the head.</p> <p>If a skunk is being chased by a predator, the skunk releases a cloud of spray, that the predator runs through.</p>	(Plants and) animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.	LS1.A (4-LS1-1)
	Animals engage in characteristic behaviors that increase the odds of reproduction.	LS1.B (MS-LS1-4)
<p>Color and Read (p.1):</p> <p>The spotted skunk does a handstand to tell predators to back off.</p>	(Plants and) animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction.	LS1.A (4-LS1-1)
<p>Crossword Puzzle (p.4, 5):</p> <p>Today skunks can be found in the Americas, and they (stink badgers) can also be found on Palawan and Calamian islands as well as Java, Borneo, Sumatra and neighboring islands.</p>	Populations live in a variety of habitats and change in those habitats affects the organisms living there.	LS4.D (3-LS4-4)