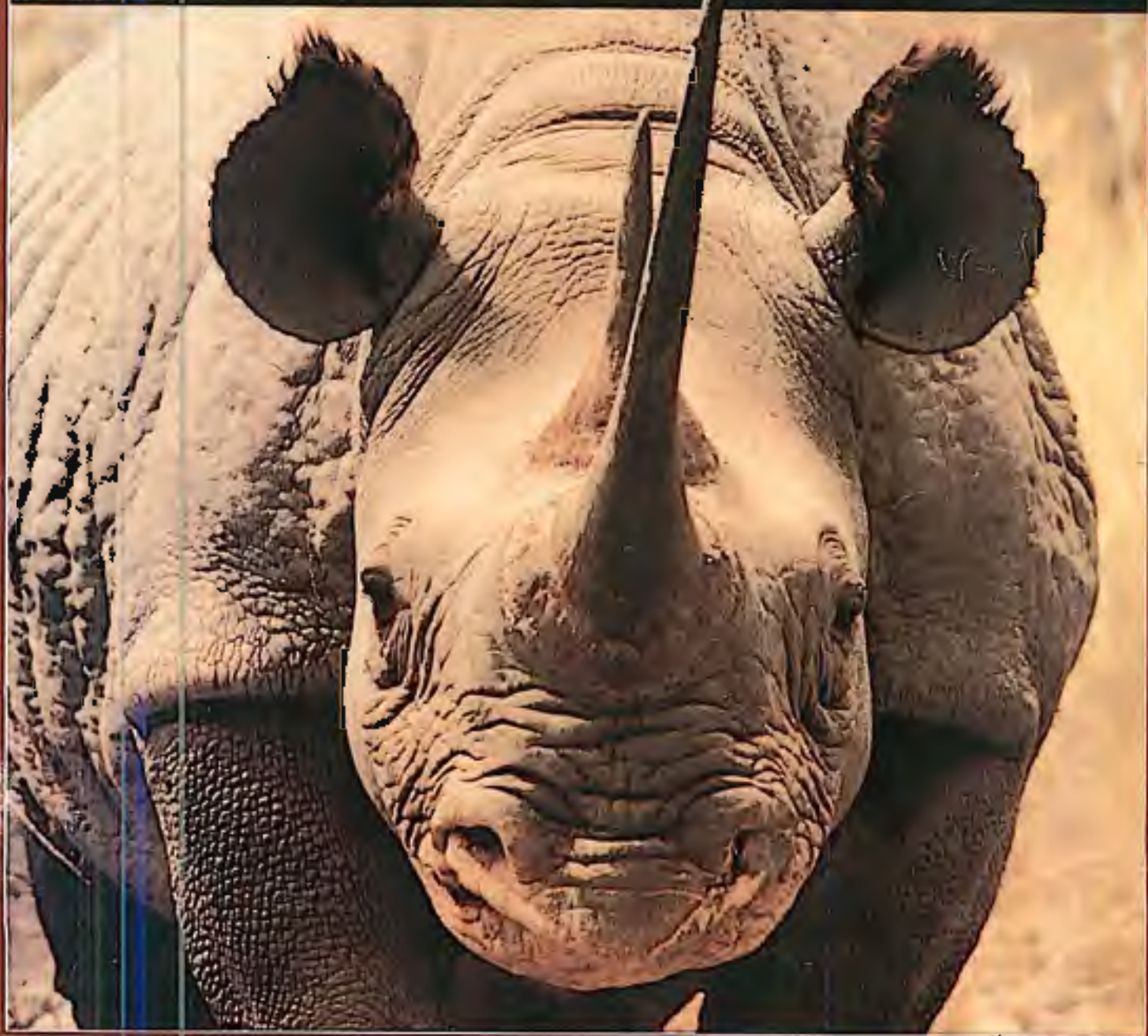


# Zoobooks

## Rhinos





**R**hinos are powerful and impressive animals. When you look at a rhino, you just can't help feeling a great deal of respect for its sheer size and strength.

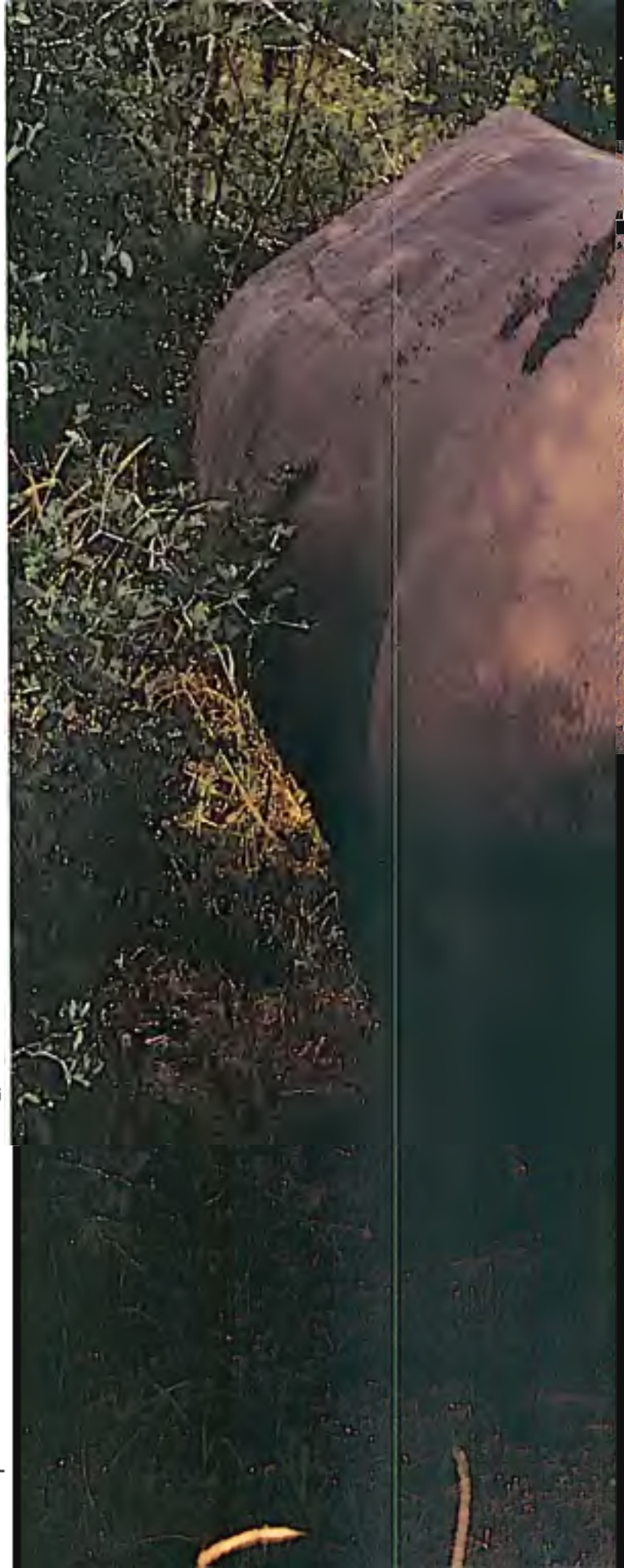
There are five living types (or species) of rhinos: the white, black, Indian, Javan, and Sumatran. The largest of all is the white rhino. This magnificent creature can grow larger than any other land mammal except for the elephant. A fully grown white rhino may stand six feet tall at the shoulder, and it can weigh almost 8,000 pounds. That means it can weigh as much as 50 average-size men.

Indian rhinos can be even taller than white rhinos, growing to a height of 6½ feet. But they don't weigh as much as white rhinos. The heaviest Indian rhino on record weighed "only" 6,300 pounds — so the Indian rhinoceros has to be called the *second* largest rhino species.

No matter what the size of a rhinoceros is, it has certain things in common with all other rhinos. Every rhino has a large head, a short neck, a broad chest, and very thick legs. All rhinos are also vegetarians. They eat only plants and never touch meat.

Can you guess what the name *rhinoceros* means? Does it describe the feet of rhinos, their tails, or their horns? You'll probably answer "horns," because rhinos are most famous for their horns — and you'll be right. The word *rhinoceros* is made up of two ancient Greek words that mean "nose" (*rhino*) and "horn" (*cerus*). And this is only fitting, because rhinos are the only animals on earth that have horns on their noses. All other animals with horns have them on top of their heads.

Unfortunately, the wonderful horns that make rhinos so unique are also dangerous for them. To get the horns, some people in Africa and Asia kill rhinos in large numbers. And this has pushed all five species of rhinos very close to the brink of extinction. Javan and Sumatran rhinos are among the most endangered animals on earth.









**T**he five types of rhinos have much smaller ranges than they had in the past — and the number of rhinos living within the ranges is much smaller. Black rhinos — once found throughout eastern and southern Africa — now live in small, scattered areas. Their numbers have declined from 12,000 in 1968 to 2,500 in 1995. The ranges of Indian, Javan, and Sumatran rhinos are so tiny that it's difficult to find them on the map. Through the efforts of many people in Africa and several zoos, the white rhino from Southern Africa is no longer considered endangered, but still requires protection.

It's easy to tell one type of rhino from another. Just look at the shapes of their heads and horns. Notice that three species have two horns, while the others have only one horn. Males and females have the same number of horns, except Javan rhinos. Javan females don't have any horns at all.



WHITE RHINO

Black Rhinoceros  
*Diceros bicornis*

White Rhinoceros  
*Ceratotherium simum*





GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS  
*Rhinoceros unicornis*



JAVAN RHINOCEROS  
*Rhinoceros sondaicus*



SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS  
*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*





People often think of rhinos as "living tanks" that have armor-plated skin. Indian and Javan rhinos look especially like tanks. Their skin seems to be divided into plates, and the bumps on the skin look like rivets.

The skin of rhinos is very thick, but not nearly as strong as armor plate. It can be scratched rather easily — and most rhinos have scars on their hides to prove it. The "joints" in the surface are really just folds in the skin (A).



**R**hinos are built for power. A great deal of their enormous weight is solid muscle. There are very strong muscles to drive the legs and exceptionally large muscles on the back to move the large head. (Can you find these muscles?)

Beneath the muscles, a rhino has thick bones. The leg bones are particularly thick because they must carry the animal's weight. As you might expect, the skull of a rhino is huge and heavily built. And it has lots of big teeth for crushing its food.



Inside their hooves, rhinos have three toes. A soft pad under the toes (B) cushions the foot and helps to carry the tremendous weight of the animal.

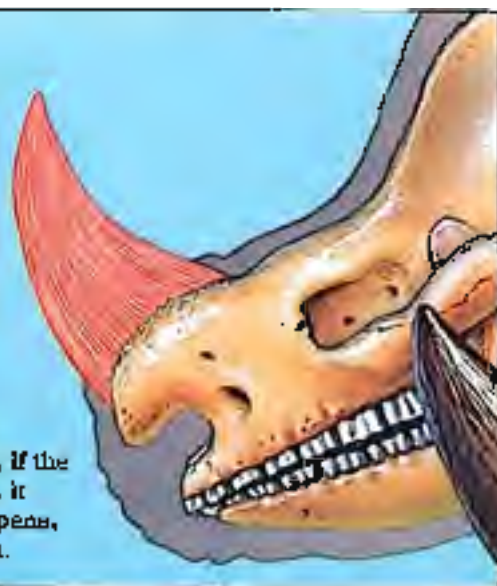
It might surprise you to learn that horses and rhinos are very closely related to each other. Like horses, rhinos walk and run on their toes — and they can run very fast. Even the biggest rhinos may reach a speed of 35 miles per hour. This is as fast as most horses can run, although a horse can keep running at this speed much longer than a rhino can.





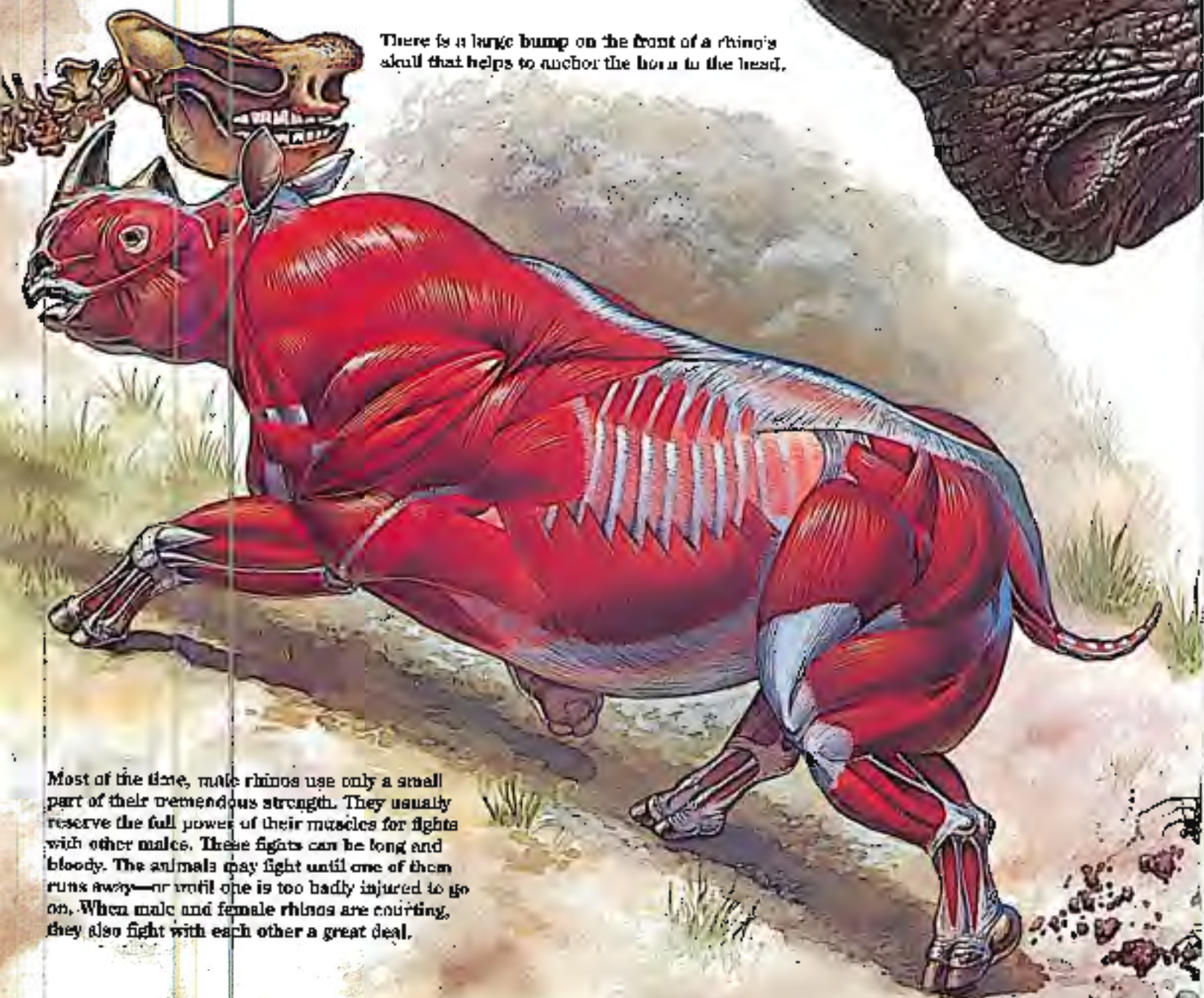
Rhino horns are different from the horns of all other animals. Other horns have a hard layer of keratin on the outside (the same material that your fingernails are made of), with a softer, spongy core inside. Rhino horns are hard all the way through. They are made of *thousands of tiny strands* of keratin, packed tightly together.

A rhino's horn is rather loosely attached to its head. As a result, if the horn hits something really hard, it may get knocked off. If this happens, the rhino can grow another horn.



The horns of rhinos have two main uses. Rhinos use them to plow up the ground when they are looking for mineral salts to eat. And, of course, they are used as weapons when rhinos fight.

There is a large bump on the front of a rhino's skull that helps to anchor the horn to the head.



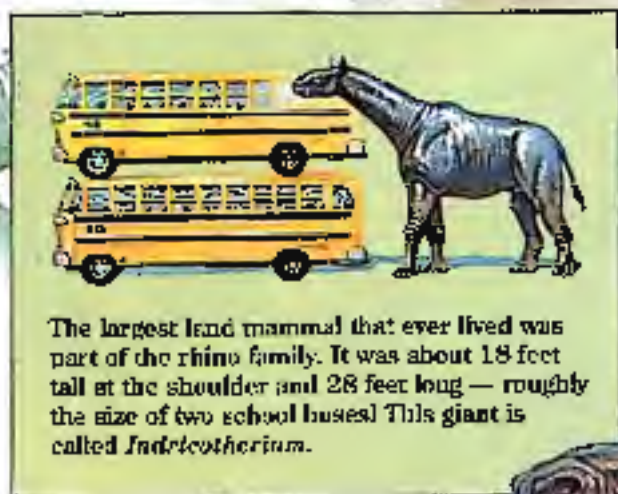
Most of the time, male rhinos use only a small part of their tremendous strength. They usually reserve the full power of their muscles for fights with other males. These fights can be long and bloody. The animals may fight until one of them runs away—or until one is too badly injured to go on. When male and female rhinos are courting, they also fight with each other a great deal.



**I**n the past, there were many more kinds of rhinos than there are today. Instead of just five species, there were hundreds of species. As you can see, some of the ancient rhinos looked like today's rhinos, and some of them did not.

The first rhinos lived about 60 million years ago. They were very small and looked like the ancestors of horses. They did not have horns, and many rhinos that came after them did not have horns either. Some ancient rhinos had much longer legs than today's rhinos, and some had much shorter legs. Can you find some other differences between ancient and modern rhinos?

Giant Ground Sloth  
*Megatherium*



The largest land mammal that ever lived was part of the rhino family. It was about 18 feet tall at the shoulder and 28 feet long — roughly the size of two school buses! This giant is called *Megatherium*.

Woolly Rhinoceros  
*Coelodonta*



Woolly Rhinoceros  
*Coelodonta*



Short-Legged Rhinoceros  
*Teleoceras*





The first rhinos lived in North America. Over the course of time, some types of ancient rhinos migrated to Asia. All living rhinos are descended from these animals. The last rhinos in North America became extinct about five million years ago.

At one time or another, ancient rhinos lived on many of the world's continents (the green areas on the map). As far as we know, there have never been rhinos in South America, Australia, or Antarctica.

Big Horn Rhinoceros  
*Elasmotherium*

Siamese Rhinoceros  
*Javan*

European Rhinoceros  
*Dicerorhinus*

Rhinoceros  
*Hyacanth*

European Rhinoceros  
*Rhinoceros*

Longhorn Rhinoceros  
*Mastodonomys*

Two-horned Rhinoceros  
*Dicerorhinus*





Black rhinos are *browsers*. They prefer to eat bushes and trees instead of grass. To do this, a black rhino has a prehensile lip that works like a large finger. This has also given them the name *hook-tipped rhino*. The lip grabs twigs and shoves them into the mouth so the teeth can bite them off. When their favorite foods are hard to find, black rhinos may eat grass. The "finger" or "hook" is used to rip up clumps of grass.



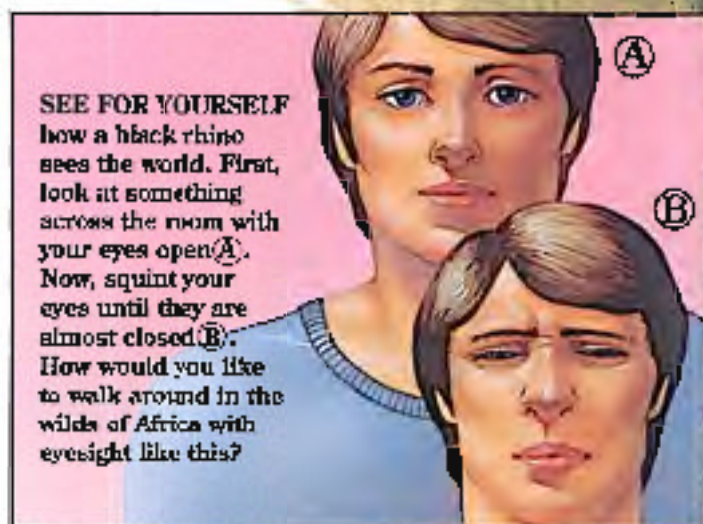
**B**lack rhinos live on the plains of Africa, where they do the same kinds of things that all rhinos do. They spend the hottest hours of every day sleeping. Most of the remaining time they spend eating huge quantities of food.

These animals are famous for their bad tempers. Black rhinos don't seem to like anything or anybody — including other black rhinos. Sometimes, two or three of them may live together. But most of the time each black rhino lives by itself and seems to prefer it that way.

Black rhinos are also famous for their terrible eyesight. They may be the most nearsighted animals in Africa. At a distance of only 15 feet, they don't seem able to tell a man from a tree.



Some scientists believe that rhinos have such poor eyesight because their ancestors lived in dense forests. In such places, the thick cover of plants prevents animals from seeing very far in any direction — so good eyesight isn't really necessary.



**SEE FOR YOURSELF**  
how a black rhino sees the world. First, look at something across the room with your eyes open **A**. Now, squint your eyes until they are almost closed **B**. How would you like to walk around in the wilds of Africa with eyesight like this?







The common names of African rhinos are not really accurate. Black rhinos are not black, and white rhinos are not white. The skin on both species is actually a dull gray. However, because rhinos like to take mud baths and dust baths, they often take on the color of the ground where they live. For this reason, they may look red, or brown, or purple—or a lot of other colors.

Rhino mothers are among the best in the animal world. They may keep their young with them for years. During that time, they teach their offspring everything they will need to know to survive on their own. Usually, the young don't leave their mothers until the mothers give birth to new babies. By that time, the young rhinos may be almost as big as their mothers.



Hold onto your hat when a rhino starts chasing after you! Rhinos can charge with such force that they can easily overturn a car or small truck.



The bad temper of a rhino may be connected to its bad eyesight. Until a rhino is almost on top of something, it can't really tell if that something is friendly or not. Rhinos may charge everything just to be on the safe side. Many times, rhinos have been seen charging at trees and large rocks, trying to scare them away!





**W**hite rhinos are much more sociable animals than black rhinos. They sometimes gather together in small herds and seem to get along with each other in a more friendly way than black rhinos ever would. They do sometimes lose their tempers, but most of the time they seem to have rather calm, unexcitable personalities. If given half a chance, a white rhino would rather run away from trouble and can even seem rather shy.

When it comes to food, white rhinos prefer grass to anything else. They are *grazers* and like to spend hours quietly chomping grass.



DOWNWIND



To compensate for bad eyesight, rhinos have a wonderful sense of smell. They may not be able to see things at a distance, but they can smell them. If you are standing *downwind* of a rhino (A), with the wind blowing from the rhino

toward you, the rhino will not be able to smell you. It will not know you are there, even if you are quite close. But if you stand *upwind* (B), the rhino will smell you and know you are there — even if you are hundreds of feet away.



UPWIND



One of the greatest pleasures of rhino life is wallowing in the mud. Rhinos love to roll around in the sloppiest and gooiest mud they can find — covering themselves from head to toe. When it's hot, this is a great way to cool off. It also keeps the skin in good condition. A thick layer of mud keeps insects from biting.

The front horn on a rhino's head is always longer than the rear horn. White rhinos have the longest horns of any species. The longest white rhino horn on record was almost 5 1/2 feet long!

White rhinos have much longer heads than other rhinos, and the heads are much heavier. They may weigh over 2,000 pounds all by themselves! It takes a lot of muscle to hold up such a head, and this is why white rhinos are the only ones with humps on their backs. The hump contains a huge mass of muscles.

Like many large African animals, rhinos are often followed by certain types of birds. Cattle egrets like to walk after rhinos and eat the insects that the rhinos stir up when they graze.

The upper lip of a white rhino is straight and wide. In the language of the Dutch settlers of South Africa, "wide" sounds like "white." Some people think this is why it's called the white rhino. White rhinos are also called square-lipped rhinos. The square lip helps the teeth cut grass as neatly as a lawn mower!



**A**sian rhinos are quite different from the black and white rhinos of Africa, and scientists believe that the two groups are only distantly related to each other. There are three types of Asian rhinos — the great Indian rhino, the Javan rhino, and the Sumatran rhino.

Indian and Javan rhinos have only one horn, and they have the bumpy armored skin that most people think of when they think of rhinos. This makes Indian and Javan rhinos look quite different from the smoother-skinned African rhinos. The Sumatran rhino has two horns like African rhinos, but the horns are very small.

All of the Asian rhinos are browsers. But they live in different kinds of places and eat different kinds of plants.



GREAT INDIAN RHINO

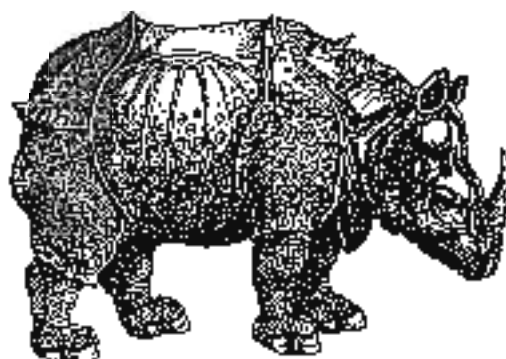
Of the Asian rhinos, the Indian is the largest, the Javan is second in size, and the Sumatran is smallest. The Javan looks like a smaller version of the Indian, but the Sumatran doesn't look like any other rhino. For one thing, it is the only rhino that has hair on its body. Scientists think that the Sumatran may be the most primitive of all living rhinos.



SUMATRAN RHINO



Unlike the rhinos of Africa, the rhinos of Asia do not live on open plains. Javan and Sumatran rhinos live in wooded areas and spend most of their time in such dense forests that they are seldom seen. As you might expect, they are leaf-eaters.



The one-horned Indian rhino is one of several animals considered to be the origin of the unicorn myth. In medieval Europe, people didn't know what a rhino looked like. The idea of an animal with only one horn fascinated them, and the unicorn was born. The Arabian oryx and other antelopes that appear to have one horn in profile are also possibilities for the mythical unicorn.



Indian rhinos prefer swampy areas, where there is a lot of water to drink and a lot of lush vegetation to eat.



All rhinos like to go into the water, but the Asian rhinos like it best of all. They are excellent swimmers. Indian and Sumatran rhinos can swim across wide rivers with no trouble at all.

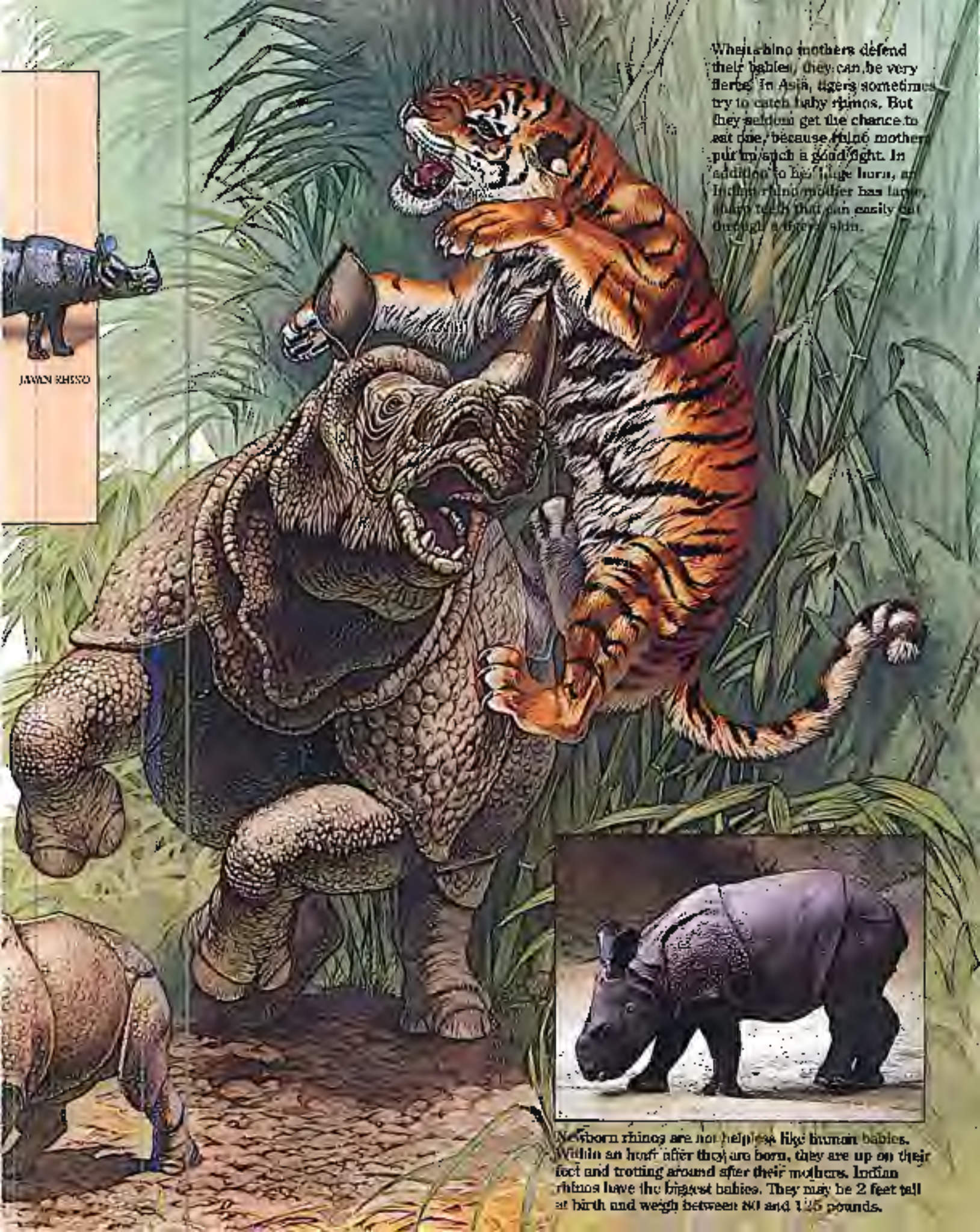




When a lioness defends her cubs, she can be very fierce. In Asia, tigers sometimes try to catch baby rhinos. But they seldom get the chance to eat one, because a lioness mother puts up such a good fight. In addition to her large horn, an Indian rhino mother has large, sharp teeth that can easily cut through a tiger's skin.



JAVAN RHINO



Newborn rhinos are not helpless like human babies. Within an hour after they are born, they are up on their feet and trotting around after their mothers. Indian rhinos have the biggest babies. They may be 2 feet tall at birth and weigh between 200 and 1,250 pounds.





WHITE RHINOS







**T**he future of rhinos in Africa and Asia is in danger. Rhinos have experienced what biologists call a population "crash." The number of rhinos has gone down faster and faster.

Today, rhinos are completely gone from hundreds of areas in which they were once found. The remaining populations of some species have become very small. There are between 420 and 780 Sumatran rhinos left. Because their habitat is being developed, the population loses as many as 50 animals a year. In 1984, only 50 to 54 Javan rhinos remained. There have been few sightings since then. The northern race of white rhinos claims only 32 left in the wild.

Like many wild animals, rhinos suffer partly because their habitat is destroyed by people. Rhinos are found in parts of the world where the human population grows most rapidly. The human need for more food and land in these areas is so great that more and more land is taken away from rhinos and other wildlife every year. By far the worst threat to rhinos comes from a small group of people who kill rhinos illegally so they can cut off their horns and sell them.

Rhino horn is extremely valuable — much more valuable than gold in some places. In Asia, many people think it has wonderful medical and magical powers. They believe that medicine made of powdered rhino horn will cure the most serious diseases, so they are willing to pay almost any price for it. In Yemen, on the Arabian Peninsula, some men pay high prices to use rhino horn as dagger handles to show that they are important and wealthy. When people are willing to pay high prices for rhino horn, poachers kill rhinos.

Many dedicated people are trying to save rhinos. Southern white rhinos were highly endangered until a program was begun in South Africa in the 1960s to protect and breed the rhinos and move some of them to other areas, including into some zoos. Although they still need protection, southern white rhinos are no longer considered endangered. By 1995, their numbers had increased to 6,750. Maybe similar programs will help other rhinos as well.

In the United States and elsewhere, education programs have been started to convince people that there are no medicinal properties in rhino horn, so there is no need to kill rhinos. To find out what you can do to help rhinos, write to World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20037.











Published by Wildlife Education, Ltd.

**ON THE COVER: A Black Rhino**

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We are deeply indebted to the late  
**Charles R. Schroeder, D.V.M.**,  
former Director of the San Diego Zoo  
and founder of the San Diego Wild Animal  
Park, who served as Zoological Consultant  
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**Our Thanks To:** Jean Veron; Deanna Cross and Mary G. de White (Metropolitan Museum of Art); Dr. Rama Rao (Washington State University); Indian Tourist Office, Los Angeles; Dr. James M. Dolan (Director of Animal Sciences, San Diego Zoo); Michael Robinson; Janet Lombard; Lynette Wexo.

Color by Color Graphics, San Diego, California  
Printed in the U.S.A.

Wildlife Education, Ltd.  
9820 Willow Creek Road  
Suite 300  
San Diego, CA 92131

ISBN 0-937934-29-1







## RHINOS

### ACTIVITIES

by Carol Spirkoff Prime

## EXTRA! EXTRA! FOUR FREE PAGES!

Horn in on these educational activities about rhinos.

Carol Spirkoff Prime is a nationally recognized educational writer. As a lecturer and supervisor in the College of Education at San Diego State University, she helps prepare future teachers.

## Rhino Magic

Match each clue with a Rhino Word in the list. Write the number of the word in the correct box in the Rhino Square below. If all your matches are correct, then you will have created a Magic Square. In other words, all the numbers in the rows and columns of the Rhino Square will add up to 15. If you need help making a match, look for the answers in this *Zoobooks*® issue.



### Clues:

- Probably the heaviest type of rhino.
- Type of rhino with the largest babies.
- Type of female rhino with no horns.
- A close relative of the rhino.
- What rhino horns are made of.
- One way a rhino uses its horn.
- Where the very first rhinos lived.
- The only type of rhino that has hair on its body.
- Type of rhino famous for its terrible eyesight.

### List:

- Sumatran rhino
- Javan rhino
- horse
- White rhino
- keratin
- Black rhino
- as a plow
- North America
- Indian rhino

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

The first magic square was probably figured out thousands of years ago. In 1541, the German artist, Albrecht Dürer, made this magic square. What's the special number found in this square? Hint: Even the corners add up to this number. Read more about Dürer on page b.

16	3	2	13
5	10	11	8
9	6	7	12
4	15	14	1



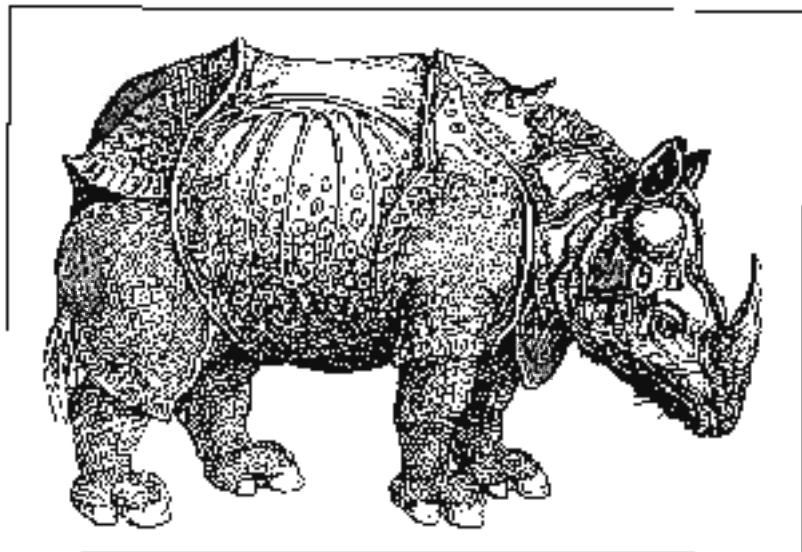
# Armored Rhinos

For centuries, people have looked at the thick, folded skin of rhinos and thought it looked like armor. In fact, the first descriptions of these magnificent animals to reach Europe said that they were covered in a thick shell or encased in hard plates.

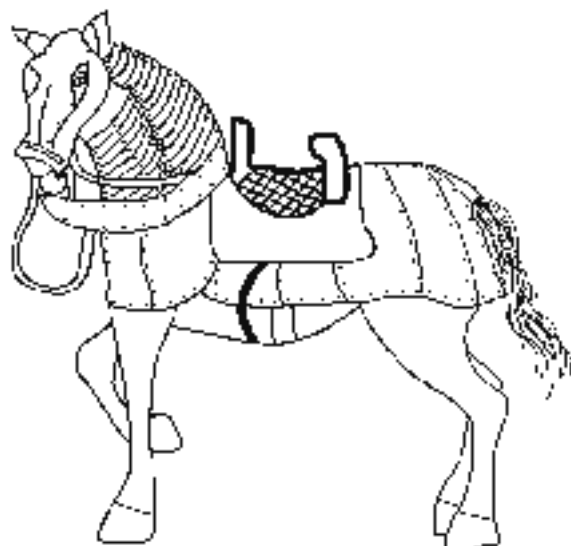
A famous German artist named Albrecht Dürer heard about these fantastic "armored" animals.

He created a detailed woodcut called *Rhinoceros*. What does his artwork remind you of? Imagine living in Europe in 1515 and seeing this artwork. What would you think?

Compare Dürer's *Rhinoceros* with the photographs of real rhinos in this book. How are they alike? How are they different? In your opinion, how might his woodcut have looked if he had really seen a rhino? What advice would you have given Dürer about his artwork?



*Rhinoceros* by Albrecht Dürer

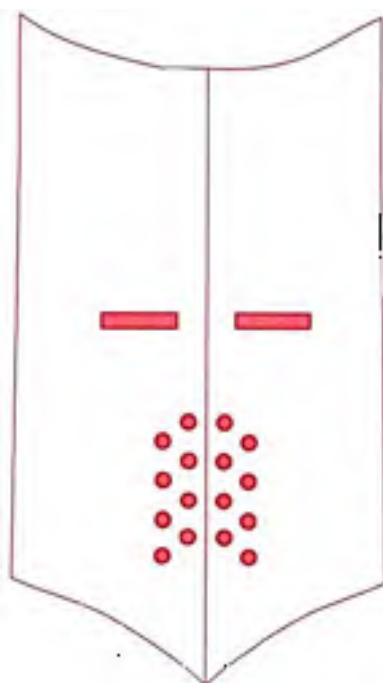


An armored horse

## Make an Armored Helmet

To make a full-sized helmet that fits over your head, you will need a pencil, a ruler, invisible tape, and a 12 x 28 inch piece of paper. We used a brown paper bag. Fold the paper in half to make a 12 x 14 inch rectangle with the fold at the top. See *Sketch A*.

Then, look at the pattern on page c, which is half the size of your helmet. Notice tabs **A** and **B** along the sides of the helmet and the curved line at the bottom edge. Draw tabs **A** and **B** and the curved line. Cut off the corners and curve as marked. Then, fold tabs **A** and **B** back and tape them down like an envelope. See *Sketch B*.



Now follow these steps to make the top of your helmet flat. Look at *Sketch C* to see what the top of your helmet will look like. Stick your hand inside your helmet all the way to the folded end. Now open your hand so that the folded end becomes flat. (The two corners will stick up.) Try to make it 6 inches across in the middle. Then, fold one top corner down toward the center about 2 inches. Do the same with the other top corner. Tape the corners in place.

See the sketch of the helmet for the position of the eye slits and air holes. But, be sure to try on your helmet to check the position of the eye slits. After removing the helmet, cut eye slits. Poke air holes where shown. (We used a hole punch.)



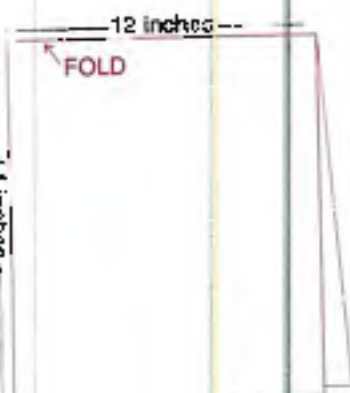
Of course, we now know that rhino skin actually has folds in it. These folds make the animal look like it is wearing plates of armor. We also know that, although the skin is tough, it can easily be scratched.

Perhaps one reason Dürer made his rhino look like it was wearing armor is that armor was common back in the 1500's. The armor worn by knights in Dürer's time was made of plates of iron or leather. As the drawing on page b shows, there was even armor for horses. Compare the armored horse with Dürer's

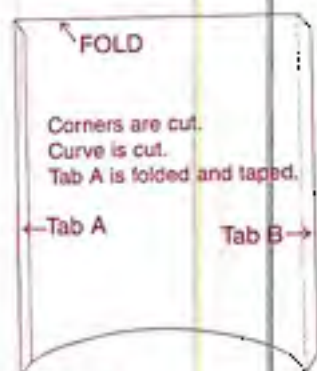
"armored" rhino. Why do you think war-horses sometimes wore armor? What would it be like to see an armored horse charging with a knight on its back?

Now, make your own fantastic drawing of an armored animal. Be creative. Use your imagination. Make a quick sketch on scratch paper, then create your final drawing.

When you're finished with your drawing, make yourself a helmet styled after armor made in the 1300's. Follow the directions on page b.



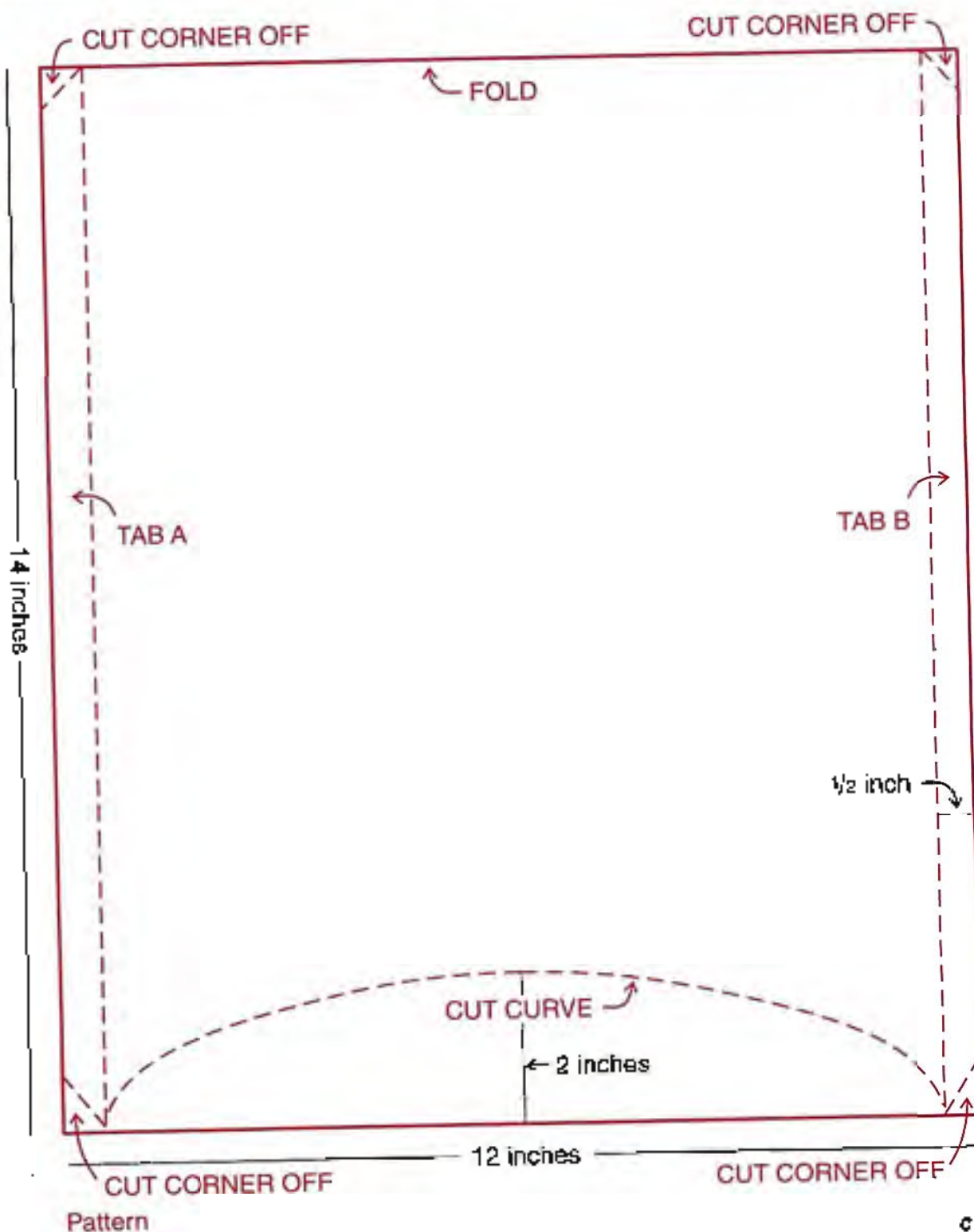
Sketch A



Sketch B



Sketch C





## Parents and Teachers.

Try these activities with younger children.

- Help your child make the helmet described on page 6, adjusting it for proper fit. Also let him or her color the drawing of an armored horse and of Dörer's "armored" rhinoceros.
- Count the rhinos that appear on each two-page spread. You might even count aloud with your child all of the rhinos in the book. Although your child may not know all of the numbers, he or she will benefit from hearing you say them in order.

Another mathematics skill that you can practice with your child is one-to-one correspondence. To do this, work with your child to put one counter on each rhino on a two-page spread. The spreads on pages 2 and 3, 10 and 11, and 12 and 13 will work best.

For counters, you could use large buttons, uncooked pasta shells, or another set of objects that are too large for your child to choke on.

### Answers: Rhino Mania:

A	B	C
4	9	2
D	E	F
3	5	7
G	H	I
6	1	8

#### Dörer's Magic Square:

The sum of the rows, columns, diagonals, 4 central squares, and corners is 34.

## Ask Joan Embery

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your letters asking about rhinos. Many of you sent letters asking about rhino horns. You can find the answers to your questions about the horns on pages 2, 3, and 6 of this book. As usual, I try to answer questions in this column that are not addressed in the actual issue of *ZooBooks*®.

Sincerely,

Joan Embery

**What is it like to take care of a rhino in a zoo? What special needs does a rhino have?**

*Selina S. from Providence, RI*

At the San Diego Wild Animal Park, our rhinos live in large, 125-acre compounds representing various geographical regions. Due to the size of the enclosures, the areas must be serviced by trucks that deliver food, provide veterinary care, and remove waste. Because of the potential danger from charges by such a large animal, the keepers must maintain a safe distance from the rhino, often using the trucks for cover. These vehicles look like they have been in a demolition derby due to the numerous encounters with charging rhinos who have felt threatened or playful.

Each animal is checked closely every day. Because of this excellent care and the large space they live in, the rhinos at the Wild Animal Park have produced more offspring than any other captive breeding facility. Some of the rhinos have become so tame that they will eat from the hands of the keepers, who must always remember the strength of the rhinos and the fact that they remain wild animals.

**What's the most interesting story that you know about rhinos?**

*Derek S. from Los Angeles*

An Indian rhino named Lasai got some seeds stuck in its horn while eating. The seeds and dirt worked their way into the cracks of the keratin horn. Surprisingly, the seeds began to grow and eventually flowers bloomed from Lasai's horn. What an image!

Send your questions about baby animals, bears, and wild horses to:  
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Color  
the  
Rhino

