Animal size comparison for kids: any two animals at true size

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Compare any two animals side by side at true relative size, beside a drawn child. Three taps each, read aloud, every number sourced. Here's how it works.

The fair way to compare animal sizes is to draw both with the same ruler, stand them on one ground line and put a child beside them. That's what Compare Two does on Peabody. You pick two animals, and it draws them side by side at their true relative size, with a child for scale and a few sourced numbers underneath.

Three taps to a picture

Compare Two never asks a child to type. For each animal there are three questions with three big boxes each: where does it live, what kind of animal is it, and which one? A box that says "more" shows up when there are more to see, and every box is read aloud. If you can't decide, "Surprise me" picks for you.

When both animals are chosen you land on a page with its own address, like cheetah vs lion, and you can swap the two or pick again from the same page. The picker remembers your last pair on your own device, so it opens where you left off.

How "true size" is drawn

Each animal is a side view, like a plate in a field guide, and every drawing is scaled the same way:

- Most animals are sized by length, nose to tail tip.
- Animals that stand tall are sized by height. A giraffe, a penguin and a kangaroo are drawn that way.
- If a source only gives the height at the shoulder, as for an Asian elephant or a polar bear, the drawing's back is lined up with that height.

Each drawing says which one it used: long, tall or at the shoulder. The child beside them is 1.2 m (about 4 ft) tall. When both animals are so small that a child would swamp them, her place is taken by a child's hand. Try hummingbird vs monarch butterfly to see it.

The magnifier

Some pairs are too far apart to see both. When one animal is more than 25 times the size of the other, Pip the pangolin holds up a magnifier and draws the small one zoomed in, with a caption that says how many times.

The best example is the blue whale and the ruby-throated hummingbird. NOAA Fisheries gives the whale as long as 33.5 m (110 ft), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service gives the hummingbird 7.5 to 9 cm (3 to 3.5 in). Peabody's page says the whale is about 400 times as long, and Pip zooms in 200 times on the bird so you can see it.

Five rows under the picture

Below the stage are five rows: top speed, weight, how long it lives, what it eats and where it lives. The bigger number wears a star, and a plain line says what it means. Every number has a small mark that opens its source and the day it was checked.

If no page I trust gives a number, the row says so instead of guessing. On Asian elephant vs blue whale, the weight row says the whale weighs about 35 times as much, and the speed row says there is no checked number for the elephant yet. Of Peabody's 100 animals, 95 have a checked size. For the other five the page says so and draws nothing.

Notes matter too. The saltwater crocodile's 6.1 m (20 ft) comes from a Fish and Wildlife Service rule, and Peabody's note on it says it's a maximum, not a typical adult. Put it beside a giraffe, which Wikidata gives as 5.5 m (18 ft) standing, and the pair page says they are about the same size.

Pairs to start with

- Pair: Asian elephant vs giraffe · What Peabody's page says: The giraffe is about twice as tall as the Asian elephant.
- Pair: Cheetah vs gray wolf · What Peabody's page says: About the same size, but the cheetah is about twice as fast.
- Pair: Giraffe vs saltwater crocodile · What Peabody's page says: About the same size.
- Pair: Asian elephant vs blue whale · What Peabody's page says: The blue whale is about 10 times as long.

Play it as a game

The size sorter turns the same drawings into a game. Three animals appear and you tap them from smallest to biggest. A wrong tap stands the two side by side so you can see, and asks again. The three in a round are always far enough apart to tell, and the same three never come twice in one visit. A round with no wrong taps adds a star to your streak, and your best streak stays on your device.

Measure yourself

Stand against a wall and have a grown-up mark your height, then compare it with the child on the stage. Then ask: how many of you would fit along a saltwater crocodile? Divide 6.1 m (20 ft) by your height. It's a small piece of real maths, and the answer is a number you can say out

loud.

Questions grown-ups ask

Are the drawings accurate?

They're simple on purpose. The width or height of each drawing comes from a measured number, but the shape is a side view, not a photo. The stage is a measuring tool, so it shows the size and the outline rather than a face.

Why does a number say "males" or "up to"?

Because pages measure different things, and a note says which. If a figure is for males, or a maximum, or an animal in human care, the note says so next to the number. The guide How big is that, really? walks through it.

Does my child have to sign up?

No. Nothing is typed and nothing is sent to pick a pair. Share links carry only the two animals' names.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads. When you've had enough animals, the library has stories to read next.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/animal-size-comparison-for-kids