Things to do and think about:
- Try and find out more information about ZSLs conservation projects in the wild. Hint: visit the animals you have just read about while at the Zoo and find out more after your visit on our website. www.zsl.org/conservation
- Which species have ZSL bred? Look for young animals as you go round the Zoo.

**Zoos first began centuries ago as centres of entertainment to satisfy people’s curiosity about animals. Zoos have evolved to become centres for conservation, education, research and recreation. These roles make the modern zoo. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is the charity that owns and runs Whipsnade Zoo and London Zoo with the aim to promote and achieve worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats.**

**Conservation**

- ZSL aims to conserve animals through projects in the field with wild animals and breeding animals in the zoos (captive breeding).
- In the field projects: ZSL runs conservation programmes worldwide in more than 40 countries. For example there is a project in Nepal conserving Asian rhinos which works with local communities to protect the species.
- Zoos breed animals in captivity as an ‘insurance policy’ so if the species goes extinct in the wild the species isn’t lost completely. ZSL has been very successful at captive breeding. Whipsnade was the first UK zoo to breed cheetahs in 1967.

**Research**

- ZSL is a scientific organisation that has a whole section of the Society dedicated to scientific research called the Institute of Zoology.
- The Institute of Zoology was set up in 1960 near to London Zoo in Regent’s Park. It is a government-funded research institute specialising in scientific issues relevant to the conservation of animals and their habitats.
- The Institute undertake a wide variety of research projects to improve understanding which can then be used to help conserve species in the wild.

For more information: www.zsl.org/science/

**Things to do and think about:**
- Imagine you are a ZSL scientist at Whipsnade. Choose a species to research.
- Visit the Amur tigers and read the information boards. What equipment do the researchers use to help them study the population in the wild?
Things to do and think about:
- Find an enclosure that you like from the visitors perspective. Describe why you like it?
- Walk around the Zoo; what else is provided so visitors have an enjoyable day?
- Attend a demonstration or talk. What did you enjoy about it? Was it just fun or did it involve any other roles of the zoo?

Background:
- Many zoos are non-profit making organisations, putting the money they raise back into the work that they do. The money is partly raised from zoo visitors.
- Zoos provide a recreational day out for visitors which is fun, relaxing and enjoyable.
- Whipsnade provides visitors with enjoyable activities such as animal demonstrations (sealions, birds and elephants), exciting ways to see animals (such as underwater viewing at the sealions), a train ride and a great variety of animals.

Things to do and think about:
- Visit the cheetah enclosure. Read the information boards. Can you find out how the cheetah’s body is adapted for running fast?
- Attend a talk or demonstration. Did you learn something new today?

Demonstrations are seasonal running from April to October. There are a selection of animal talks throughout the year, timings can be found in the day planner.

Background:
- Zoos educate visitors about the natural world. It is unique chance for people to get up close to animals; especially exotic species.
- Raising awareness about nature and the problems species face can help people to support conservation at home, in the zoo and out in the wild.
- ZSL aims to educate the public by providing interesting signs, interactive talks, demonstrations and sessions for school groups as well as a chance to interact with animal experts.
Imagine that you are starting up your own zoo but you only have enough money to house one animal to start off with. You must achieve the four main roles of a zoo with this one species so...choose your species wisely. Read about the four main roles of a zoo and think about which species you might pick that could be used for all four roles.

The roles of a modern zoo

There are four main roles of zoos today. They are: conservation, research, education and recreation.

- **Conservation** happens in zoos by protecting and breeding animals in captivity so they don’t become extinct. Zoos also work out in the wild conserving animals in their natural habitats.

- **Research** is important if zoos are going to protect and conserve animals. Scientists need to understand why animals are becoming endangered before they can plan a conservation project.

- **Education** is important because if people do not know about a species or why it is threatened they can’t do anything about it.

- **Conservation** projects cost a lot of money so zoos need people to visit in order to raise money. **Recreation** is therefore an important role of a zoo. If zoos were not fun and interesting people wouldn’t come and zoos wouldn’t be able to raise money for conservation.

Zoos like ZSL Whipsnade Zoo are here to help conserve animals and their habitats. Whipsnade Zoo is run by a charity called ZSL, which stands for the Zoological Society of London. Money raised from people coming into the Zoo goes back into the work that ZSL does both in the Zoo and in the wild.

Which species have you chosen to start your zoo with?

**Conservation**

A zoo’s main role is to conserve. Think about how you would conserve your chosen species. Is your chosen animal threatened? If so, why is it threatened in the wild? If your species isn’t threatened in the wild how could having that animal in the zoo help to conserve other species?

Find out about your species and how organisations including zoos are conserving/protecting the species. Use the space below to make notes.
Themed notes: Role of a modern Zoo
KS 3 and 4

Research
What do you need to know about your chosen animal? Research your species. Find out where it is found in the wild, the habitat it lives in, what it eats, when it breeds, how many offspring it has and whether it lives in groups or on its own. Make notes in the space below.

Education
What do you find interesting about your chosen species? What information do you think it is important the visitors to your zoo know about it? How would you educate your visitors? Would you provide talks, signs or do you have a more interactive way of giving your visitors information? Make notes or sketch out your ideas in the space below.
Recreation

Zoos have to be fun and interesting places to visit. Designing an interesting and engaging enclosure that appeals to visitors is very important. What would the public like to see from an enclosure? Think about viewing and getting close to the animals as well as signs and activities for the visitors. When designing an enclosure you must also think about the needs of both the animals and the keepers. For the animals think about space, the species normal habitat, social grouping and enrichment. For the keepers think about access to the enclosure, safety and where the keepers will prepare and store food.

Use the space below to make notes and the other side of the page to draw an enclosure for your chosen species. Make sure you label the key features of your enclosure.
Recreation: designing an enclosure