

Bat Themed Math and Science Activities for Kids

Let's learn about bats! These math and science activities are perfect for kids in the elementary grades, or ages 5 - 10. Older kids can read the facts, while younger kids will enjoy listening to them.

These activities are perfect for any animal unit, or at Halloween time as a non-scary but still seasonal activity.

Extension ideas:

- Choose a species of bat to research and write a report about.
- Write a story about a bat.
- Print photos of bats online and try drawing them.



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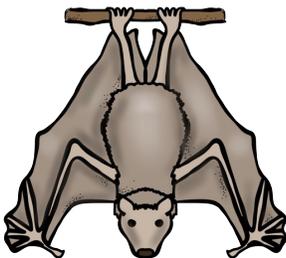


Amazing Bat Facts



Free-Tailed Bat

- Bats live all around the world. You can find them in nearly every part of our planet except extreme deserts and the cold regions near the earth's poles.
- There are more than 1,400 species of bats.
- Bats live in large groups called colonies.
- Bats are mammals. They are the only flying mammals!
- We depend on some types of bats to pollinate plants such as bananas, mangoes, guavas, and cocoa (the plant that chocolate comes from). Can you imagine life with no chocolate?
- Each night, a bat can eat up to its body weight in insects. Bats eat mosquitos but they also eat other insects like moths and beetles. Some bats are fruit eaters.
- Bat droppings are called guano. Bat guano was very useful during the American Civil War. The nitrates in the guano were needed for making gunpowder!
- Most bats hang upside-down. The muscles in their feet are actually relaxed when they are in a clenched position!
- Bat predators include owls, hawks, and snakes. However, disease is also a major problem for bats. Many bats die from white-nose syndrome, which is a fungus.



- The largest bats are the flying foxes, with some species reaching a 5 ft. wingspan!
- Bats use echolocation for hunting and getting around at night. It's their way of seeing in the dark!

How Big are Bats?

A weight and measurement activity



A Kitti's Hog-Nosed Bat (also called the Bumblebee Bat) weighs as much as a penny. Only 2 grams!

Find a penny and hold it in your hand. Can you imagine a bat this heavy?

A Big Brown Bat weighs 0.8 oz, or about 23 grams. This is the same weight as a pink rectangular school eraser. Hold an eraser in your hand.

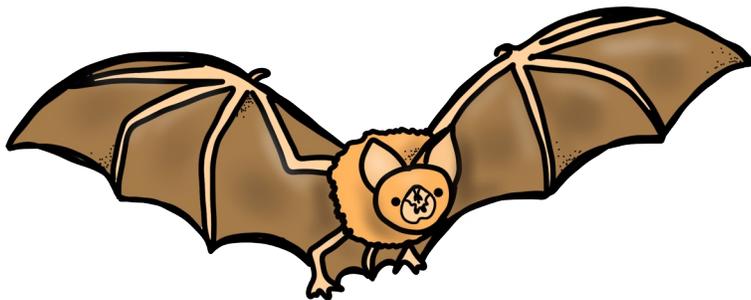
Even though the Big Brown Bat is so light, its wingspan is about 13 inches, or 33 centimeters. Find a ruler and measure that length.

A Little Brown Bat weighs about 0.5 ounces, or 14 grams. This is the weight of an unused glue stick. Hold a glue stick in your hand to feel this weight.

The Hoary Bat lives all over North America. It weighs 1 ounce, or 27 grams. This is the mass of a Hot Wheels car. Find a car and see how heavy it feels.

The Golden-Crowned Flying Fox is one of the largest types of bat. It eats fruit and lives in the Philippines. It can have a wingspan up to 5 feet or 1.5 meters! Measure that length. It might be fun to do this outside and draw a life-size Flying Fox with sidewalk chalk. Or you can use masking tape to make a 5 ft. line on the floor or on a wall. Is your wingspan greater than or less than 5 ft? Spread out your arms and see!

The Golden-Crowned Flying Fox weighs about 2.6 pounds, or 1.1 kilograms. This is about the same weight as a 4th or 5th grade math textbook. Hold a heavy book to see how much this bat weighs.



Bat Echolocation

Bats have an amazing way of “seeing” in the dark. You may have heard the term “blind as a bat,” but bats are not actually blind at all! However, they do use echolocation instead of sight to find their prey.

When a bat is hunting for insects, it sends out a series of high-pitched sounds. The sound waves bounce back to the bat, which tells it the location, size, and texture of the insect. Isn't that amazing?

We can hear bats make some noises, but when they are using echolocation, the sound frequencies are too high for us to hear.

Ball Echolocation Activity

Question: Can you roll a ball to find out how far away the wall is?

Supplies Needed: A room with a wall, a ball, a blindfold, and a partner

Instructions: Blindfold one player. Their partner will then walk them around a little so that they don't know where they are or how far they are from the wall. Then the partner will direct them to sit down facing the wall.

The goal is for the player to scoot close enough to the wall that they can reach out and touch it. First, they will roll the ball and listen for when it hits the wall. Their partner should give it back to them if it doesn't roll back to their hand. Based on the sound, the player will scoot closer to the wall. Then they should roll the ball again and listen to the sound.

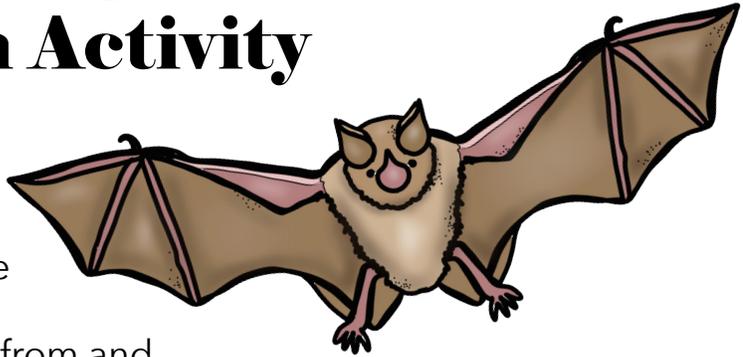


When the player thinks they are close enough to the wall to touch it, they should reach out their hand. If they can't feel the wall, they can roll the ball again and then decide how much to scoot forward.

Did the ball help you to find the wall?

Finger Snapping Echolocation Activity

We can't use echolocation to determine the size and texture of an object the way bats can, but our ears do use sound waves to tell which direction a sound is coming from and approximately how far away it is.



Question: Can you tell which direction a sound is coming from without using your eyes?

Instructions: One player will sit in a chair on the floor blindfolded. Then one or more players will snap their fingers or clap their hands. The blindfolded player will point to the where the sound came from. The players should make their sounds from all different locations, but only one at a time.

Can you identify the direction of a sound without using your eyes to see what was happening?

