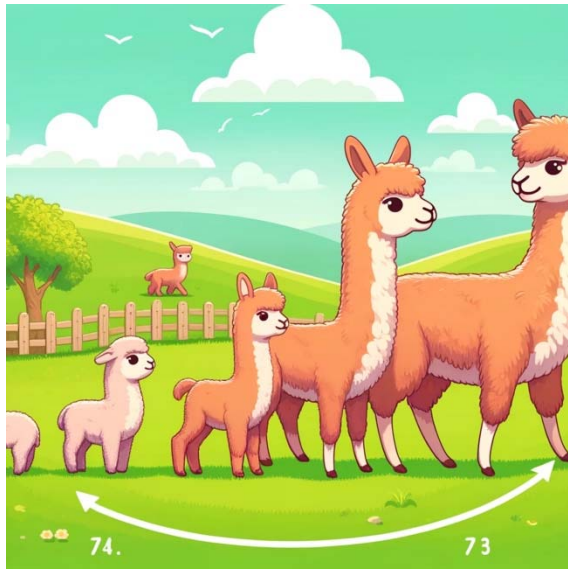


Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Life Cycle of an Alpaca



The life cycle of an alpaca is fascinating and begins when a baby alpaca, called a cria, is born. A mother alpaca, called a hembra, is pregnant for about 11 months before giving birth. Usually, a mother gives birth to only one cria at a time. The newborn cria can stand and walk within an hour of being born, and it quickly starts nursing from its mother.

During the first few months of life, the cria relies on its mother for milk and protection. It stays close to the herd for safety. By the time the cria is about six months old, it begins eating solid food, like grass and hay, in addition to nursing.

As the alpaca grows, it enters the juvenile stage. This stage lasts until the alpaca is around two years old. At this point, it reaches adulthood and becomes fully mature. Male alpacas, called machos, and females, called hembras, may start reproducing around this age.

Adult alpacas continue to live in herds, as they are social animals. They graze on grass and hay, which are their primary sources of food. Alpacas are known for their soft fleece, which humans shear once a year to make warm clothing and textiles.

An alpaca's lifespan is typically 15 to 20 years, though some may live even longer with proper care. Throughout their life, alpacas remain gentle and calm animals, making them popular on farms and petting zoos.