

Name _____

What Does a Squirrel Look Like?



Squirrels are small, nimble animals that are easy to recognize. They come in different colors and sizes, depending on the species. Most squirrels have soft, thick fur that helps keep them warm. Their fur can be gray, brown, red, or even black. Some squirrels, like the red squirrel, have reddish-brown fur with white undersides, while others, like the gray squirrel, have gray fur that blends in with tree bark.

Squirrels are not very big animals. Most are about the size of a loaf of bread. Their bodies are usually 9 to 12 inches long, but their bushy tails add another 6 to 10 inches! The average squirrel weighs around 1 to 1.5 pounds, although some species, like the tiny African pygmy squirrel, weigh as little as a few ounces.

One of the most noticeable features of a squirrel is its tail. A squirrel's tail is long and fluffy, and it helps the squirrel balance as it climbs trees or jumps between branches. It also acts as a blanket in cold weather and a signal flag to communicate with other squirrels. Some squirrels have stripes, like the chipmunk, which has dark and light stripes running along its back. These stripes help the chipmunk blend into the forest floor.

Squirrels also have sharp claws and strong legs for climbing. Their large eyes are positioned on the sides of their heads, giving them excellent vision to spot predators. They have small, rounded ears that stick up, making them look alert and curious. Unlike some animals, squirrels do not have horns or specialized body parts, but their ability to climb and leap with precision is unique.

Squirrels may not look very big or fierce, but their specialized features, like their tails, claws, and keen eyesight, make them perfectly suited for life in the trees. They are not only fun to watch but also important for nature, helping spread seeds and create new plants wherever they live.