

AT THE ZOO



Little 
Acrobats™

PART OF THE
Children's Dance
Method™

At the Zoo

TODDLER: AGES 1.5 TO 3, WITH A CAREGIVER

PRESCHOOL: AGES 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD

How to Begin Class

Begin your class by greeting your students. Ideally, they'll line up at your classroom door before class begins. When it's time for class, have them enter. You can give them a step to do to take their places for roll call, or simply have them walk to their places.

Next, take roll. Have a question of the day ready to ask your students. It can be something simple like, "What is your favorite color?" It can be theme-related like, "What's your favorite zoo animal?" Or it can be something more personal like, "Tell me one fun thing you did this week." The purpose of the question is to help you connect with your students.

Circle Stretch

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Let's Blow Bubbles!

Wiggles and Wakeup

Peek-a-Boo Toes

Hamstring Stretch (Preschool Only)

Can you be an elephant reaching your trunk as long as you can toward your toes?

Hide and Seek

Hide and Seek Monkeys

Rock and Roll (Preschool Only)

Panda Bear Rolls (Optional: pretend to eat bamboo between rolls.)

Butterfly

Butterflies at the Zoo

Straddle Stretch (Preschool Only)

Peacock Stretch (Show off your feathers as you straddle!)

Hands and Wrists

Depending on the season where you are:

Fall: Leaves change colors and fall from the trees!

Winter: Snowflakes are falling at the zoo!

Spring/Summer: Flowers are blooming at the zoo!

Tabletop Bridge

Time for a Picnic at the Zoo

Cat/Cow Pose (Preschool Only)

Cheetah Pose

Superhero Pose (Preschool Only)

Birds at the Zoo

Seal Pose (Preschool Only)

Seal Pose

Technique

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Plié and Twirls (Toddlers) / Rise and Turn (Preschool)

We're at the zoo! Let's look for animals! Look low.

(Plié) Look high. (Preschoolers rise.) Look all around.

(Twirl/Turn) Repeat.

Tendu (Preschool Only)

Let's stretch our legs long like a giraffe's neck!

Passé

I see pink flamingos.

Sways

I see elephants swinging their trunks from side to side.

Sautés

I see a gazelle! They leap and jump so gracefully!
Let's sauté gracefully like a gazelle.

Échappés

I see alligators! (Pretend your legs are the gator's mouth. Open and snap!)

Directional Hops

I see kangaroos! (In this lesson theme, have your students do their directional hops as a frog hop rather than a bunny hop.)

Hops on One Foot from Side to Side (Preschool only)

I see monkeys jumping side to side from tree to tree.

Hops on One Foot (Preschool only)

Did you know a penguin can jump 9 feet out of the water? (https://youtu.be/2GqVK_dvS80) Let's be penguins jumping as high as we can! How high can you jump on one foot?

Fireworks Jumps

Lions Pounce and Roar!

Traveling

Please use the movement cards included at the end of this lesson plan.

Stations

Please use the station cards included at the end of this lesson.

Prop Time

For toddlers, "Prop Time" is simply a free dance with a prop of the teacher's choice. You may also do a freeze dance to reinforce listening skills.

For preschoolers, [choose one to three "Prop Time" activities from the Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#) for additional skill work.

Goodbye

You can (optionally) end your class with a brief free dance for students while you blow bubbles for them.

Finish your class by giving each student a sticker and telling them each something they did well in class that day. Focus on complimenting good effort, listening skills, and positive attitude more than skill accomplishments. Give each student a coloring page. These are a great way for students to bring a piece of dance class home with them for the week. Hand out certificates if it's the last week for the theme.

Music Playlist

You can find a music playlist with theme-inspired music for your acro dance class here:

[At the Zoo Music Playlist in Spotify](#)



AT THE ZOO - MOVEMENT CARDS

There are SO MANY ways you can use movement cards in your dance classes. For toddlers, we typically do use movement cards for traveling across the room and occasionally the merry go round option. For preschoolers, we like to incorporate all of the following ways with traveling across the room and the merry go round option as the most common. You may incorporate any of these ways during the "traveling" portion of class.

Traveling Across the Room

This is what we typically design our movement cards for. (Although they certainly don't have to be limited to this!) Choose a movement card like you're picking a card from a deck of cards. Or, let one of your students pick the card. The anticipation of what the next card and movement will be will help to keep your students' attention during the traveling portion of class. Plus, they always like seeing what cute animal or picture is on the card chosen!

Merry Go Round

Place your movement cards in a pile face-down in the center of the room. Have your students make a large circle. Call on one student to pick a card from the center. They pick a card from the pile. Play music as all students do the chosen movement in a large circle around the room. Pause the music and your students freeze (like in freeze dance!). Call on another student to pick a card next. Repeat until all students have had a turn or all movement cards have been used.

Add-On

This is one of my favorite pre-choreography activities. Make a dance by playing "Add-On", but with movement cards! Hold the cards out face-down, like a deck of cards, for a student to pick one. Have all students do the movement in place a certain number of times. (For example, 3 hops in place.) Have another student pick a card. Add that movement to the choreography. (For example, if the second card chosen was twirls, you might have your students do 3 hops then a twirl.) Continue until all students have had a turn. By the end, you'll have a little dance your students helped to make up!

Free-Dance

Let your students free dance, and choose movements from the movement cards!

NOTES FOR CARTWHEEL PREPARATION:

Most Likely for Toddlers. Cartwheel Preparation 1: Tummy-Hand-Hand-Jump-Tummy. The student should begin with their tummy facing the front. They place one hand on the mat stack, then the other hand on the mat stack. Then they jump over the mat stack and stand so their tummy faces front again.

Most Likely for Preschoolers. Cartwheel Preparation 2: Tummy-Hand-Hand-Foot-Foot-Tummy. The student should begin with their tummy facing front. They place one hand on the mat stack, then the other hand on the mat stack. Then they hop over the mat stack to land on one foot then the other foot. They should finish standing so their tummy faces front again.

More Advanced Option for Preschoolers. Cartwheel Preparation 3: Cartwheel Coordination Over the Mat Stack. In this version, students have the coordination of hands and feet. They still begin and end standing with their tummies facing front, but they do a smoother, more coordinated cartwheel over the mat stack. They should work on their torso being more up and down, perpendicular to the floor. Their legs may not quite be perpendicular—they may still be at an angle as the student does the cartwheel, but the student is working on stretched legs during the cartwheel.

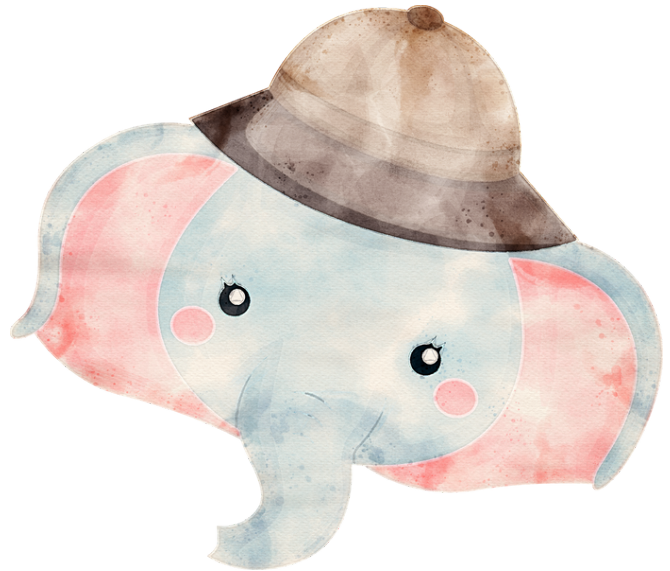
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LION LEAPS

TODDLER

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ELEPHANT WALKS

(SAME AS BEAR WALKS)

TODDLER

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HUNGRY ALLIGATOR POSE

(SAME AS A SEAL POSE)

TODDLER

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CHEETAH FAST RUNS

TODDLER

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MONKEY CARTWHEEL PREPARATION

TODDLER

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TALL GIRAFFE WALKS

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RHINO RUNS

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ZEBRA SIDEWAYS WALKS

TODDLER

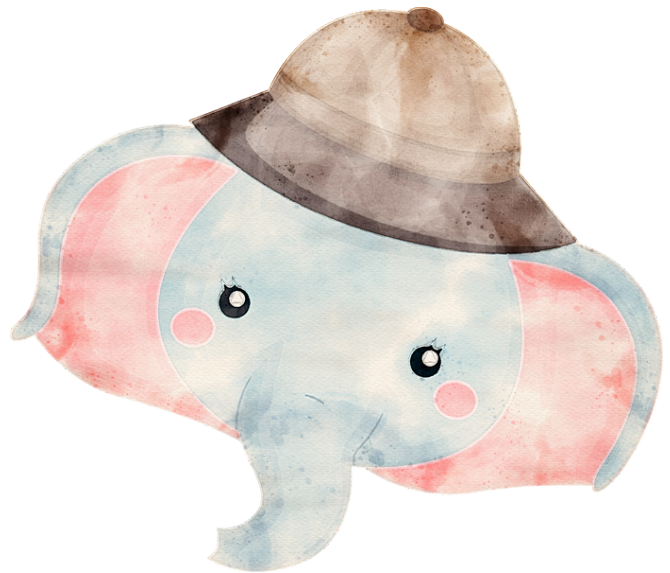
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LION LEAPS

PRESCHOOL

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ELEPHANT WALKS

(SAME AS BEAR WALKS)

PRESCHOOL

Little Acrobats™



HUNGRY ALLIGATOR POSE

(SAME AS A SEAL POSE)

PRESCHOOL

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CHEETAH FAST TUCK JUMPS

PRESCHOOL

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MONKEY CARTWHEEL PREPARATION

PRESCHOOL

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GIRAFFE WALKS EN DEMI POINTE

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RHINO RUNS EN DEMI POINTE

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ZEBRA GALOPS

PRESCHOOL



AT THE ZOO - STATION CARDS

Card 1

Toddlers and Preschoolers. Seated pike. The focus should be on sitting tall with the legs stretched in front.

Card 2

Toddlers and Preschoolers. Superhero pose! (Lay on tummies with arms and legs stretched long.) Optional: have a Pilates ball or arched mat for students to lay on.

Card 3

Toddlers and Preschoolers. Tabletop pose and walk. Optional for preschoolers: set out cones for students to go around.

Card 4

Toddlers and Preschoolers. Elephant walks (same as bear walks). Optional for preschoolers: set a ladder on an incline for students to climb up.

Card 5

Toddlers. Step or hop across spot markers.

Preschoolers. Hop on two feet across spot markers.

Card 6

Toddlers. Plank position then stand up and swing side to side like a monkey!

Preschoolers. Foot up and foot down on a mat stack, then swing side to side like a monkey!

Card 7

Toddlers and Preschoolers. Wall handstand with tummies facing the wall.

This card is optional for toddlers. It may depend on how old your toddler class is.

Card 8

Preschoolers Only. L handstand. (Handstand with backs facing the wall with just one leg up; the other leg is down/to the side so that legs make an L shape.)

This card is optional for preschoolers who are not yet ready for an L handstand.



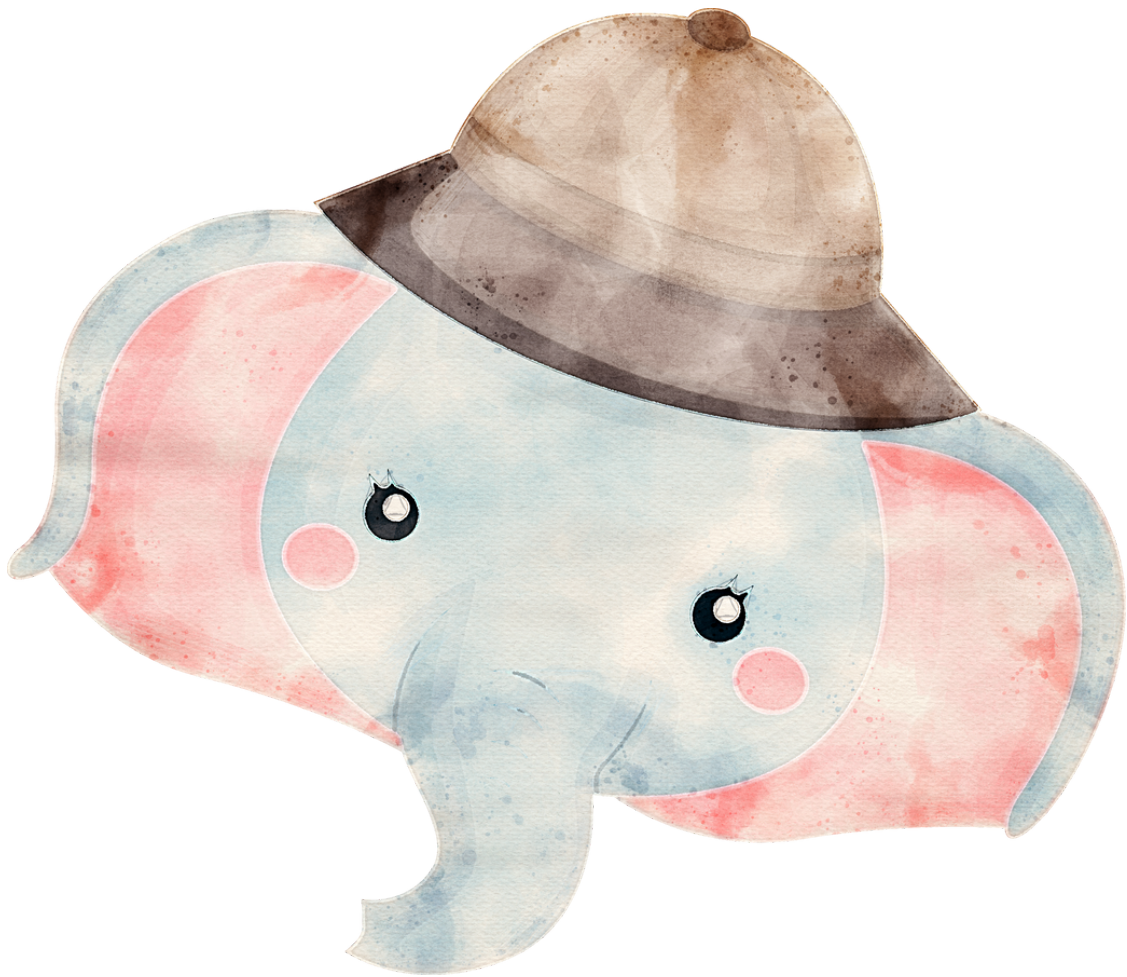
SEATED PIKE



SUPERHERO POSE



TABLETOP POSE + WALK



**ELEPHANT WALKS
(SAME AS BEAR WALKS)**



STEP OR HOP ACROSS



HOPS WITH TWO FEET TOGETHER



PLANK POSITION



FOOT UP FOOT DOWN ON MAT

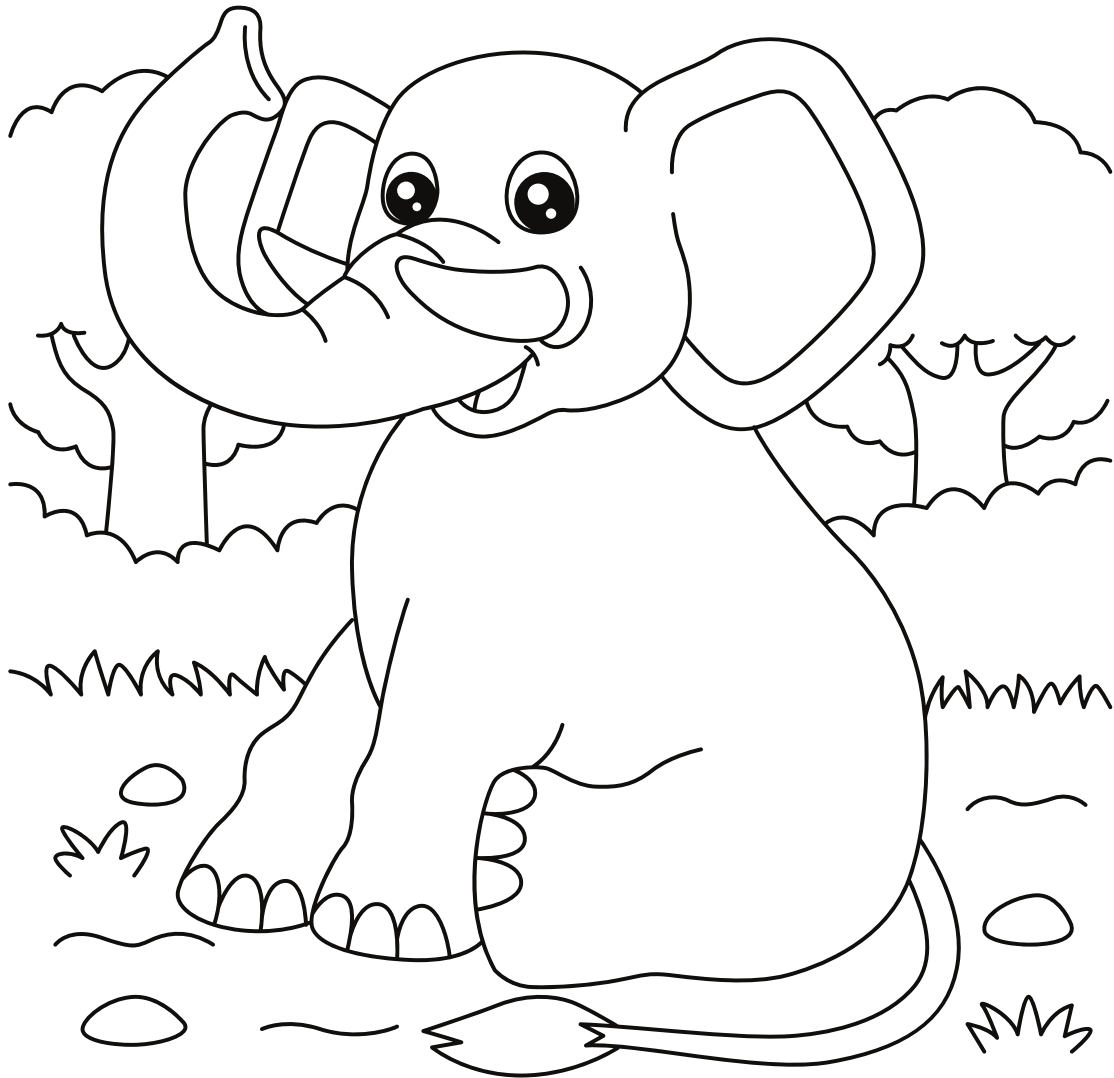


WALL HANDSTAND WITH TUMMY FACING THE WALL

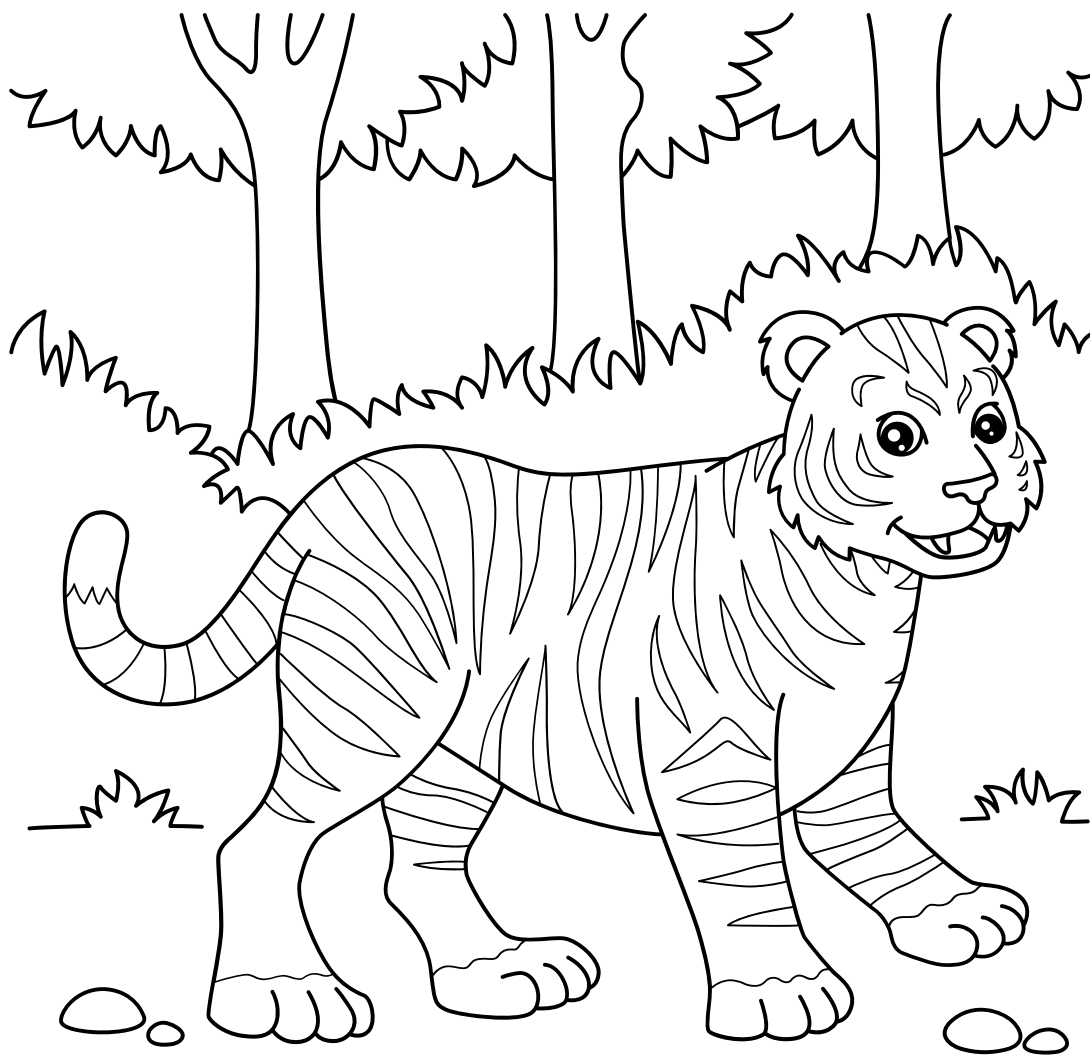


L HANDSTAND

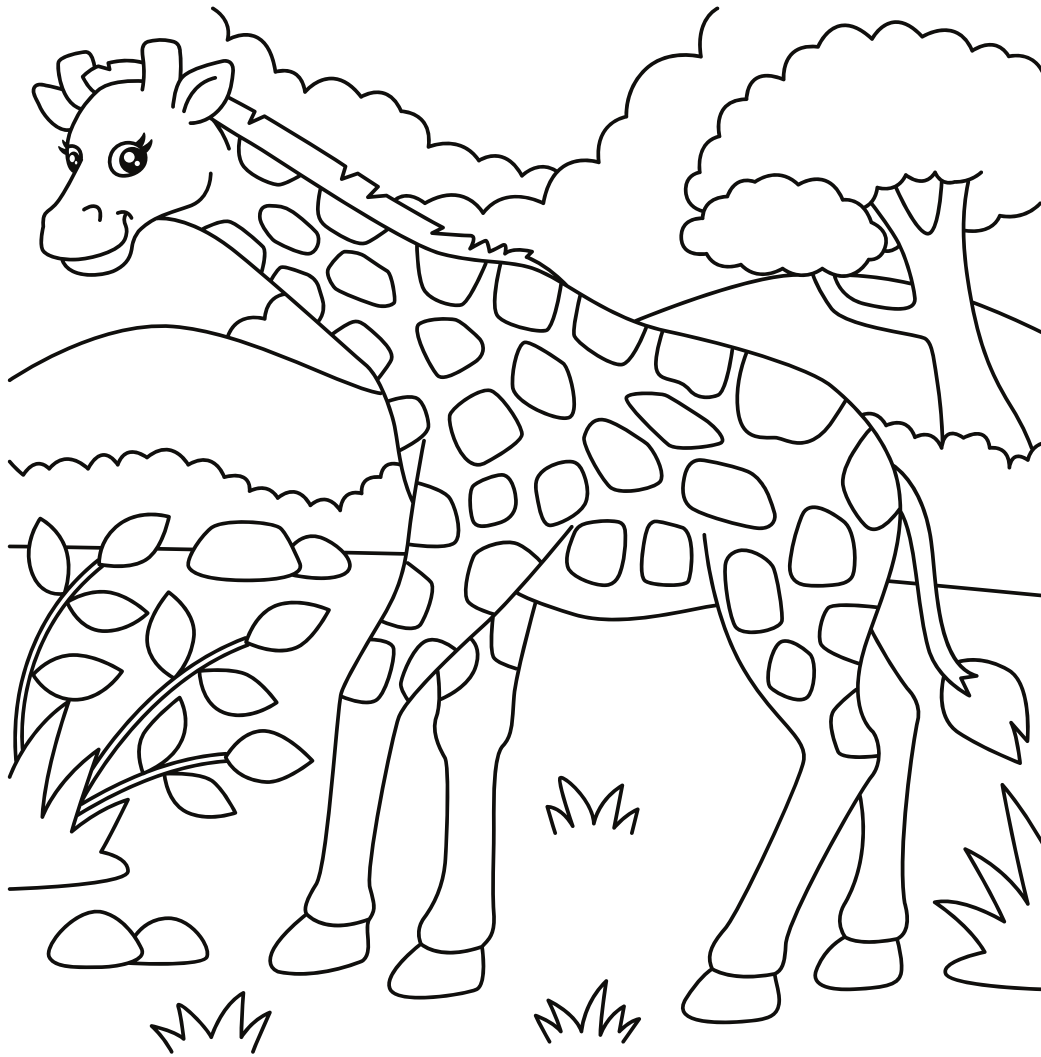
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