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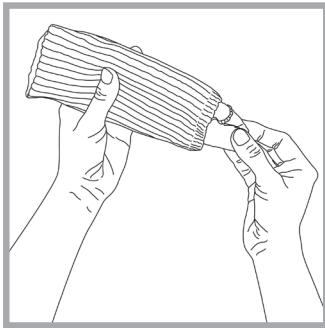
Build a Meerkat

Make a meerkat out of a sock and other craft materials. See the box at the end of page 2 for more about meerkats' amazing adaptations, which help them survive harsh desert conditions.

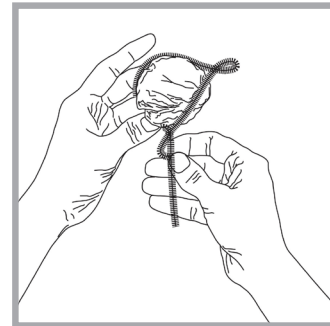
Materials Needed:

- tan-colored sock
- tissue or paper towel
- pipe cleaners
- tan-colored felt, 8"x8" square
- rubber bands
- fine-point black marker
- craft eyes
- glue
- scissors
- brown construction paper
- tape
- two plastic forks

- 1 To make the body, pull the toe of the sock inside of itself.



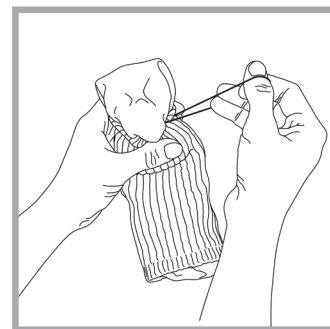
- 2 With 2-3 tissues, make a ball. Wrap a pipe cleaner around the ball. Make a pointed nose shape, and twist the pipe cleaner ends to make the neck.



- 3 For the head, wrap the felt around the tissue and pipe cleaner. Fold down around the pointed nose. Fold forward at the ears, and hold it together at the neck.



- 4 Put the neck into one end of the sock. Wrap a rubber band around it to hold the head and body together.



Build a Meerkat, continued

- 5** With the black marker, draw the nose, whiskers, and large dark circles where the eyes will go. Shade the inside of the ears.



- 6** Glue the craft eyes onto the dark eye spots.



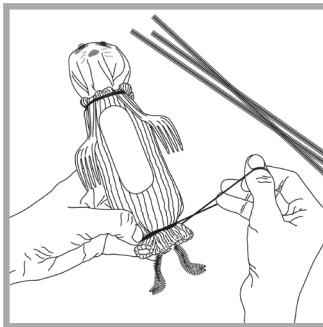
- 7** Attach the two forks to the front of the meerkat with the rubber band. Fold the forks, or ask an adult to help you cut them.



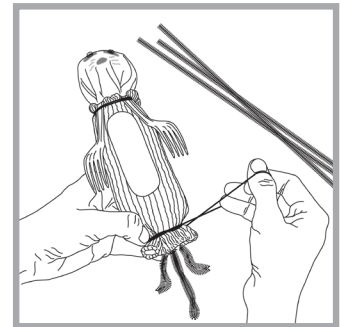
- 8** Cut an oval shape from the brown construction paper, and attach to the front of the meerkat with tape.



- 9** Fold two pipe cleaners in half. Bend each to make feet and legs. Put the legs into the sock opening. Wrap a rubber band to hold them in place. Try to stand up your meerkat.



- 10** A meerkat's tail helps it balance when standing. To make a strong tail, fold two pipe cleaners in half and twist them. Loosen the rubber band and insert the tail. Bend it back and stand up your meerkat.



How do a meerkat's characteristics help it survive?

- A meerkat's beige color helps camouflage it in the desert environment. (Step 1)
- Meerkats close their ears to keep sand out while digging. (Step 3)
- Meerkats have large, dark spots around each eye to protect from the glare of the desert sun. (Step 5)
- A meerkat has four sharp claws on each hand for digging up prey. It also uses its claws to dig burrows. (Step 7)
- Desert temperatures drop very low at night. A meerkat must start the day by warming its small body. It points its dark belly to the morning sun to absorb the warmth. (Step 8)
- A meerkat must be able to stand on its hind legs for long periods of time, in search of predators or enemy meerkats. Meerkats have strong tails they can use like a third leg. Now your meerkat is ready to stand up to the desert! (Step 10)