



## ALPACAS AS A FARMING ALTERNATIVE



Photograph courtesy The Farmyard Nursery

## A PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCE PACKAGE

Published by:  
Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.  
PO Box 5108,  
BRADDON ACT 2612

Tel: 02 61512073  
Email: [info@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:info@alpaca.asn.au)  
Web site: [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)



## ALPACAS AS A FARMING ALTERNATIVE

Over the years, students in classrooms have been introduced to the traditional types of farming in Australia but, as the years progress, it has been recognised that farming styles and the animals being bred on farms are becoming more diverse. Once such opportunity is ALPACAS.

There are over 1,000 breeders across various parts of Australia breeding and farming these unique animals.

Alpaca farming is now an established primary industry and is an agricultural pursuit that is ideally suited to Australia's fragile environment.

The Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. has designed this booklet to assist primary school educators in introducing '**alpacas as a farming alternative**' into their classrooms.

The suggested activities cover a range of ideas and are compatible with the different types of thinking that can be generated with students.

A visit by an alpaca owner to your school, so that your students can be introduced to this exciting industry, can be easily arranged. The Association has 8 Regions across Australia, each with members who are willing to bring alpacas to your school.

For further information contact the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. On 02 6151 2073 or email: [info@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:info@alpaca.asn.au) or visit the AAA Ltd. web site at [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

Published by:  
Australian Alpaca Association Ltd.  
PO Box 5108  
BRADDON ACT 2612  
Tel: 02 6151 2073  
Email: [info@alpaca.asn.au](mailto:info@alpaca.asn.au)  
Web site: [www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)

© Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. 2010



## Suggested activities for JUNIOR students

### Before the visit of alpacas to your school

- > Complete a KWL Chart (*refer page 4*)
- > Focus: What questions can we ask the owner?

### During the visit

- > Record the visit, take photos, video
- > Ask questions
- > Draw / sketch the alpaca

### After the visit

- > Activity sheets – Ordering (*refer page 5*)
  - Making a jigsaw (*refer page 6*)
  - Labelling (*refer page 7*)
  - Classifying (*refer page 8*)
  - Comparing (*refer page 9*)
  - Making a true and false quiz (*refer page 10*)
  - Completing a T Chart (*refer page 11*)
  - Draw and make a collage using fleece from an alpaca (*refer page 12*)
  - Magazine hunt (*refer page 13*)
- > Write a recount
- > Make a class mural – life of an alpaca
- > Label the photos from the visit with captions
- > Make biscuits using an alpaca shaped cutter
- > Make a two dimensional alpaca
- > Use a world map to locate Peru – compare Australia and Peru
- > Locate all the places in the world where alpacas are farmed
- > Make a class chart listing the characteristics of: a cria, a hembra, a tui and a macho
- > List all the things that are made using alpaca fleece
- > Make a class graph of favourite alpaca fleece products

### Supporting resource material for teachers

- > “Introduction to Alpacas” video
- > “Managing Alpacas in Australia” booklet
- > AAA handouts

TOPIC

What I **KNOW**

What I **WANT** to know

What I have **LEARNT**

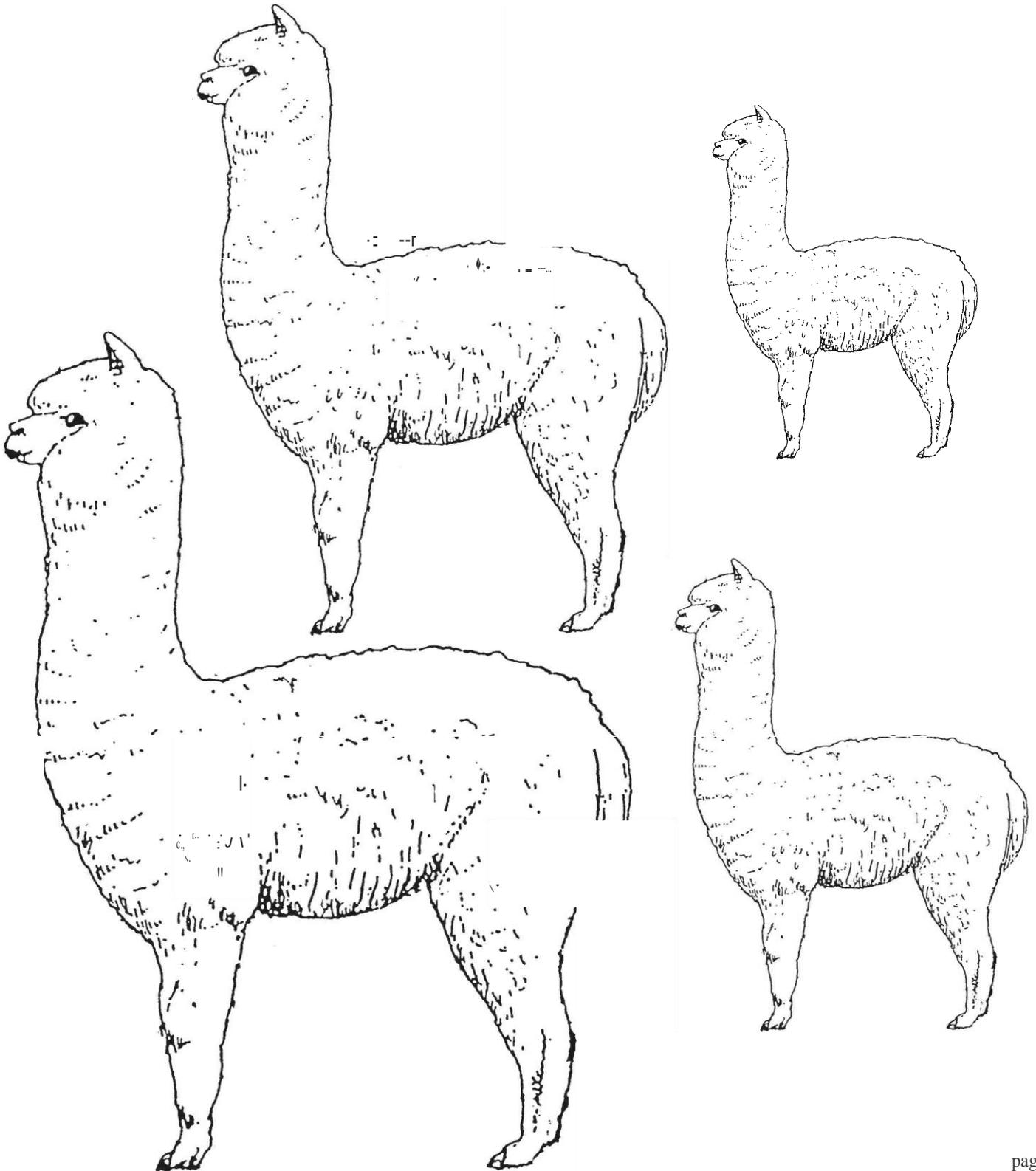
What I <b>KNOW</b>	What I <b>WANT</b> to know	What I have <b>LEARNT</b>



## ORDERING

Cut out each alpaca.

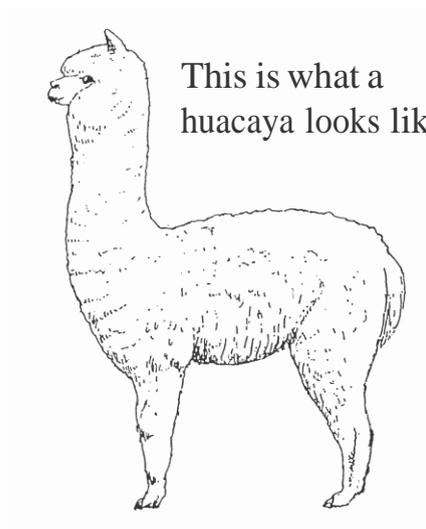
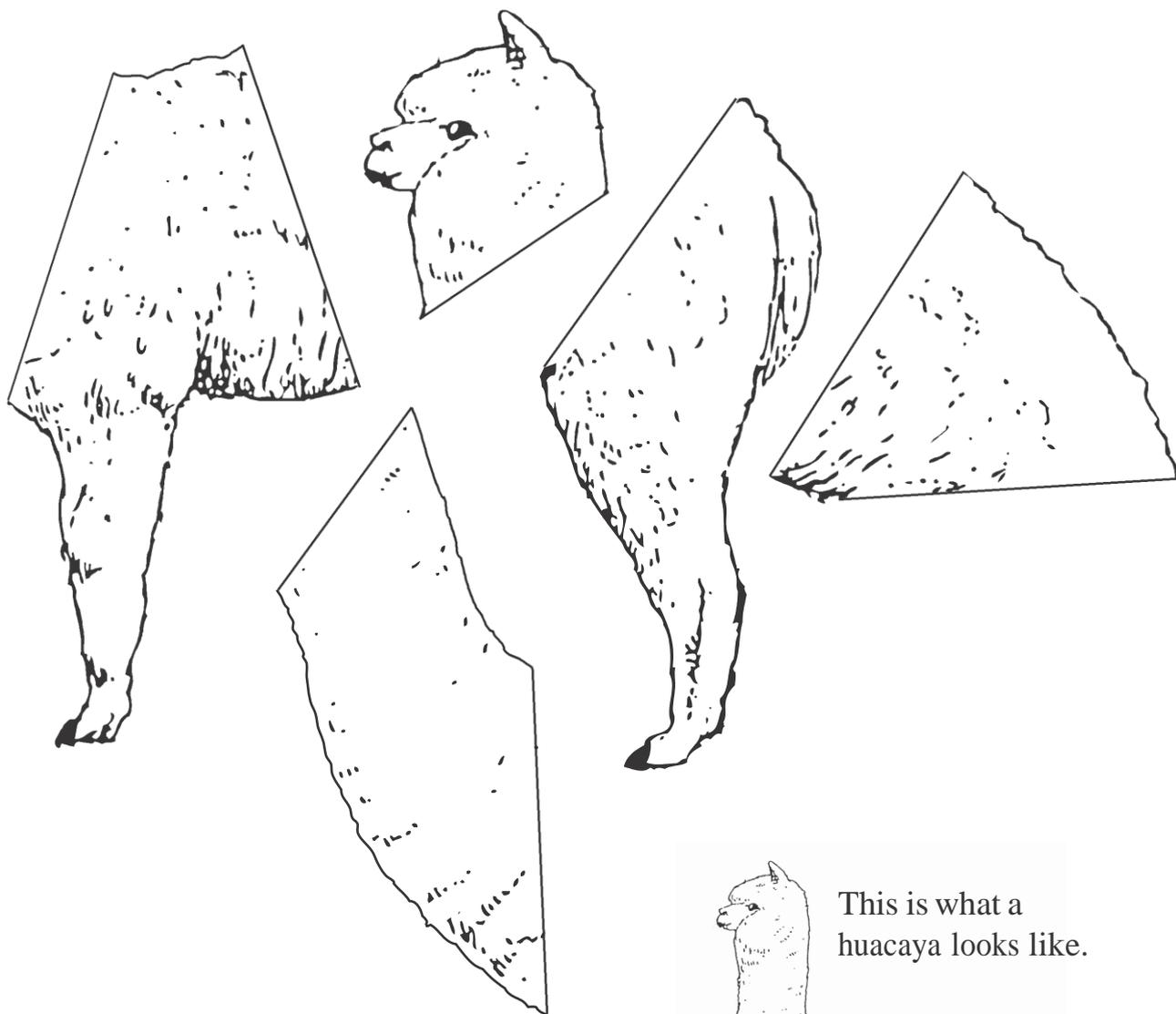
Put the alpacas in order from smallest to biggest.





## MAKING A JIGSAW

Cut out the pieces and make an alpaca. It will be a huacaya.



This is what a huacaya looks like.

Make your own jigsaw of another farm animal. Ask a friend to make the animal.



## LABELLING

Cut out the words and match them to the parts of the alpaca.

**Ears**

**Mouth**

**Body**

**Long Neck**

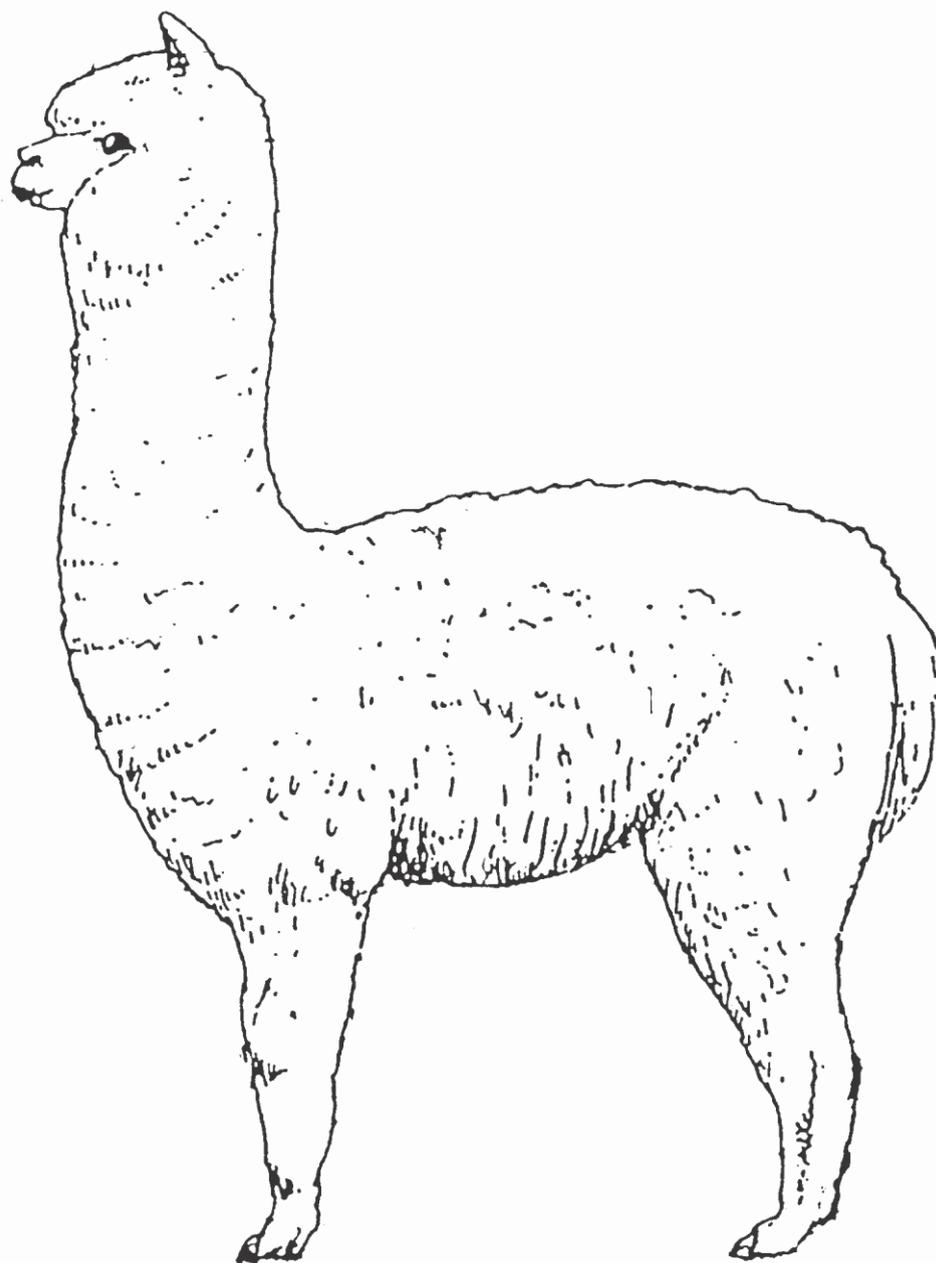
**Legs**

**Bonnet**

**Tail**

**Padded Feet**

Can you name any  
more parts?





## CLASSIFYING ANIMALS

Place the names of the animals in the right boxes.

Alpaca, bear, sheep, cow, crocodile, monkey, giraffe, goat.

Animals that are farmed	Wild animals that you may see in a zoo

Your turn


### What word is this?

hembra, farm, alpaca, halter, suri, camels, padded, jumper, cria, bonnet

- — — — — An animal with a soft handling fleece.
- — — — — Used to lead an alpaca.
- — — — — Name for a baby alpaca.
- — — — — It is made from alpaca and will keep you warm.
- — — — — Describes their feet.
- — — — — Alpacas are related to these animals.
- — — — — The top of the head is called this.
- — — — — A type of alpaca.
- — — — — A female alpaca is called this.
- — — — — Where you can visit and see alpacas.



## COMPARING

A male alpaca is bigger and usually grows more fleece than a female alpaca.

**Write your own sentences using the following words:**

alpaca / llama	
huacaya / suri	
cria / tui	
male / female	
sheep / alpaca	
baby / adult	

Your turn

--	--

### BABY ALPACAS (Crias)

What words would you use to describe a baby alpaca?

Write your own words here.
----------------------------

Draw your cria here.
----------------------





## T CHART

**Draw a baby and an adult alpaca in the boxes below:**

Baby	Adult

**List the physical changes made from baby to adult as well as their capabilities:**

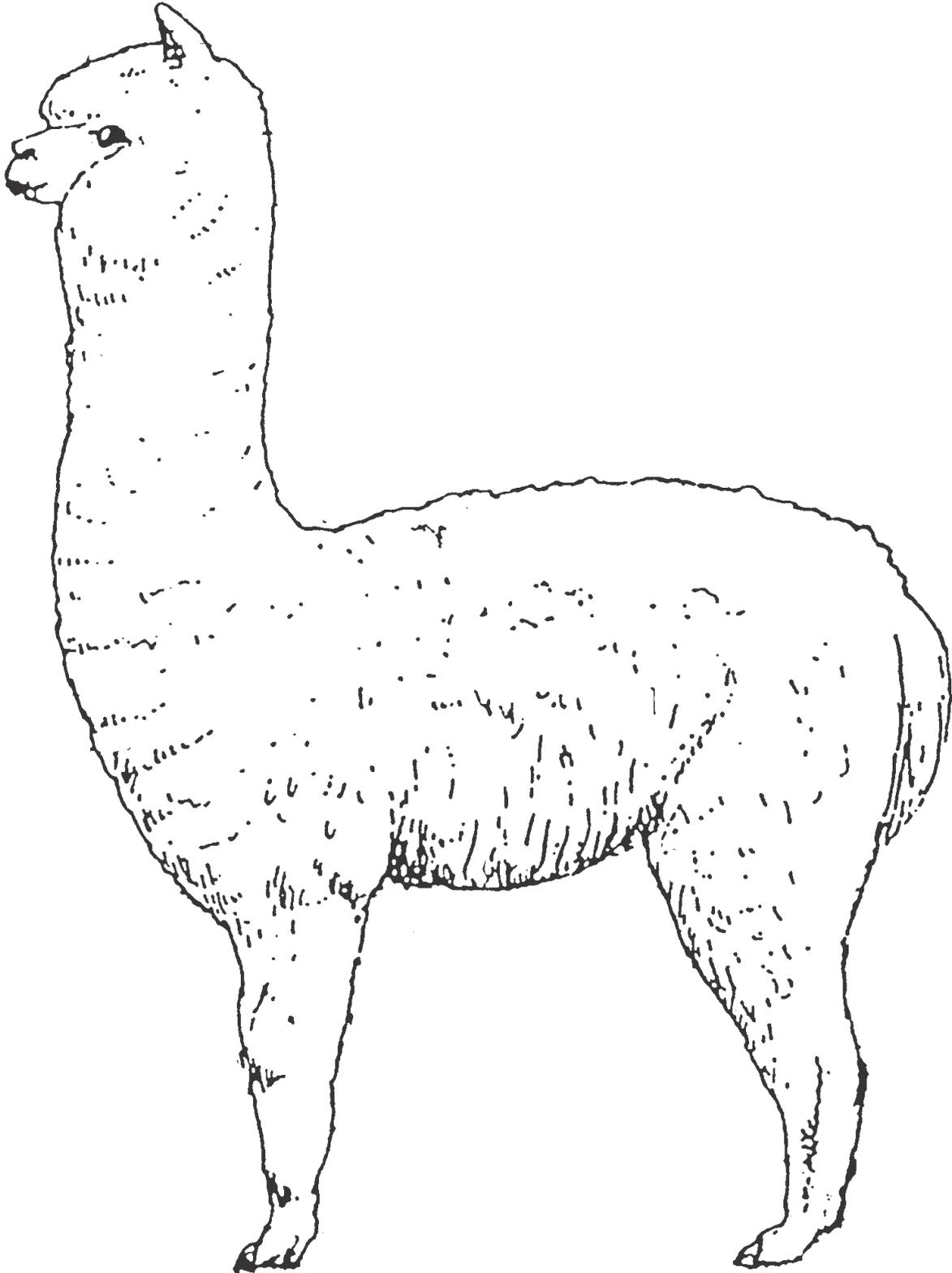
Baby	Adult



## COLLAGE

**Make your very own alpaca by glueing alpaca fleece on to the shape below.**

(The shape can be enlarged to suit the size required or the students can draw their own).





## MAGAZINE HUNT

**Choose an alpaca magazine.**

Title:

---

Where is it published?

---

Write down five things you found out about alpacas in the magazine:


Choose a picture. What page is it on?

Write down three sentences that describe the alpaca picture:




## Suggested activities for MIDDLE AND UPPER students

### Before the visit of alpacas to your school

- > View the DVD entitled, “Introduction to Alpacas” (*refer page 16*)
- > Complete a KWL Chart (*refer page 17*)
- > Develop a list of questions that the alpaca owner could be asked.
- > Understand the safety precautions required when dealing with a farm animal.

### During the visit

- > Take photos
- > Ask questions
- > Record / video the talk
- > Sketch the alpaca

### After the visit

- > **English activities** – complete:
  - DVD review (*refer page 16*)
  - The KWL Chart (*refer page 17*)
  - The Y Chart (*refer page 18*)
  - Here is the answer, what is the question? (*refer page 19*)
  - The Alpha Ladder (*refer page 20*)
  - Organise information activity (*refer page 21*)
  - Fact / Opinion. True / False. (*refer pages 22 and 23*)
  - The Venn Diagram (*refer page 24*)
  - Attribute Listing Organiser (*refer page 25*)
  - Word Activities (*refer page 26*)
- > **Society and Environment activities**
  - Make a list of the Dos and Don'ts when handling alpacas or any farm animal
  - Create a historical timeline of the journey of alpacas from the Incas of Peru to 2010 in Australia
  - Compare and contrast current alpaca farming practices in Peru /Australia
  - Write captions for the photos taken during the visit
  - What is the same / different between a suri and huacaya fleece or alpaca / sheep / angora goat fleece?
  - Investigate the different needs of people in farming communities compared to suburban communities
  - Compare the different types of awards given to alpacas / goats / cows / cats / dogs / craft / photographic entries at agricultural shows
  - What are the different types of ribbons awarded to show winning alpacas? What is the significance of each of the colours?
  - Design a business trip for a person interested in buying alpacas from Australian owners / Overseas owners



> **Write:**

- A recount of the visit of alpacas to your school
- A newspaper article on an alpaca winning the “best exhibit” at the Royal Show or local agricultural show
- A newspaper article on an alpaca with twins
- Compose a jingle about alpacas

> **The Arts activities**

- Design a poster for an alpaca show
- Design an alpaca breeder’s business card
- Make an alpaca related jigsaw for younger students
- Make a diorama on the topic of alpaca farming
- Make a two dimensional alpaca
- Design a board game: “Farming alpacas”
- Make biscuits using an alpaca shaped cutter
- Design awards / ribbons for an alpaca show

> **Mathematics activities**

- Survey at least 10 of your classmates. Graph their favourite alpaca colours
- An owner has a herd of 3 adult females. Their first cria are due in 2010. How many years will it take the breeder to reach a herd of 50 alpacas?

> **Web site activities**

- Make a list of all the countries in the world where alpacas are found
- Make a comparison chart... countries where sheep are farmed / countries where alpacas are farmed
- Compare the different types of farming environments where alpacas are farmed
- Investigate the environmental impact of animals on farming properties
- What are the different fleece characteristics of merino sheep, cashmere goats and alpacas?
- What is biosecurity? How does this impact on an alpaca breeder?

**Useful web sites**

[www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au) • [www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au)

**Supporting resource material for teachers**

- > “Introduction to Alpacas” DVD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gmg6TfhVw0U>
- > “Managing Alpacas in Australia” booklet
- > AAA Ltd. handouts
- > Frequently Asked Questions leaflet

Available from the Australian Alpaca Association Ltd. or from the web site  
[www.alpaca.asn.au](http://www.alpaca.asn.au)



## DVD ACTIVITY

The purpose of the DVD is to learn about the alpaca industry.

The following information can be found on the DVD entitled, “Introduction to Alpacas”. This can be seen on the AAA YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gmg6TfhVw0U>

- > The two types of alpacas.
- > The two important dates in the Australian alpaca industry’s history.
- > The differences between a suri and a huacaya.
- > At least seven things about the care and maintenance of alpacas.
- > At least two environmental features relating to alpacas.
- > Five comments about the characteristics of alpaca fleece.
- > Five things that can be made using alpaca fleece.

After viewing the DVD write a review or record the information you have found in a retrieval chart.

TOPIC

What I **KNOW**

What I **WANT** to know

What I have **LEARNT**

TOPIC

LOOKS LIKE

SOUNDS LIKE

FEELS LIKE



## HERE IS THE ANSWER, WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

Alpaca	
Huacaya	
Suri	
Jumper	
11-11½ months	
3-4 kilos	
Lustrous fleece	
Peru	
Cria	
Hocks	
Macho	
Environmentally friendly	
Llama	



## ALPHA LADDER

Complete an Alpha Ladder:

<b>A</b>  Alpaca	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>



## ORGANISING INFORMATION

Think of all the attributes of this animal.

**Organise your thoughts under the following headings:**

Life Cycle	Movement Styles	Eating Habits	Care and Maintenance

**What other categories can you add for this animal?**




## THE ALPACA INDUSTRY

The Australian alpaca industry is now almost 30 years old – and what a healthy industry it is now.

The first three alpacas arrived from Chile in 1988. They marked the start of what has become an established fleece industry, with a national herd of approximately 100,000 now treading Australian soils.

The strong growth has been matched by strong demand for exports around the world.

To many people, alpacas are strange looking creatures, more often than not greeted with, “Look, it’s a llama”, upon first sight. But while they’re both South American Camelids, a llama is about twice the size of an alpaca and has distinctive banana shaped ears.

Since 1988, more than 1000 breeders have joined original importers in farming these unique animals. The Australian alpaca population has grown to its present size mainly through breeding up from the initial imported stock from Peru, Chile and the US.

Rapid advances in embryo transfer (ET) technology have allowed breeders to concentrate on breeding better quality stock. During the ET process, embryos are taken from genetically superior females and established in recipient females, the result being higher quality offspring from these surrogate mothers. This has also aided the alpaca industry in its quest for a better fleece.

Alpaca markets in meat and hides have also opened. As well, alpaca wethers are used to guard lambs, kids – and even chickens – from foxes.

Australian animals and fleeces are now ranked amongst the world’s best.

Australian alpaca fibre is used extensively in high fashion garments, as well as knitwear, blankets, doonas and even carpets.

Many Australians are taking up alpaca breeding as a serious enterprise, one that is very appealing once people understand the versatility and environmentally friendly nature of the animal.



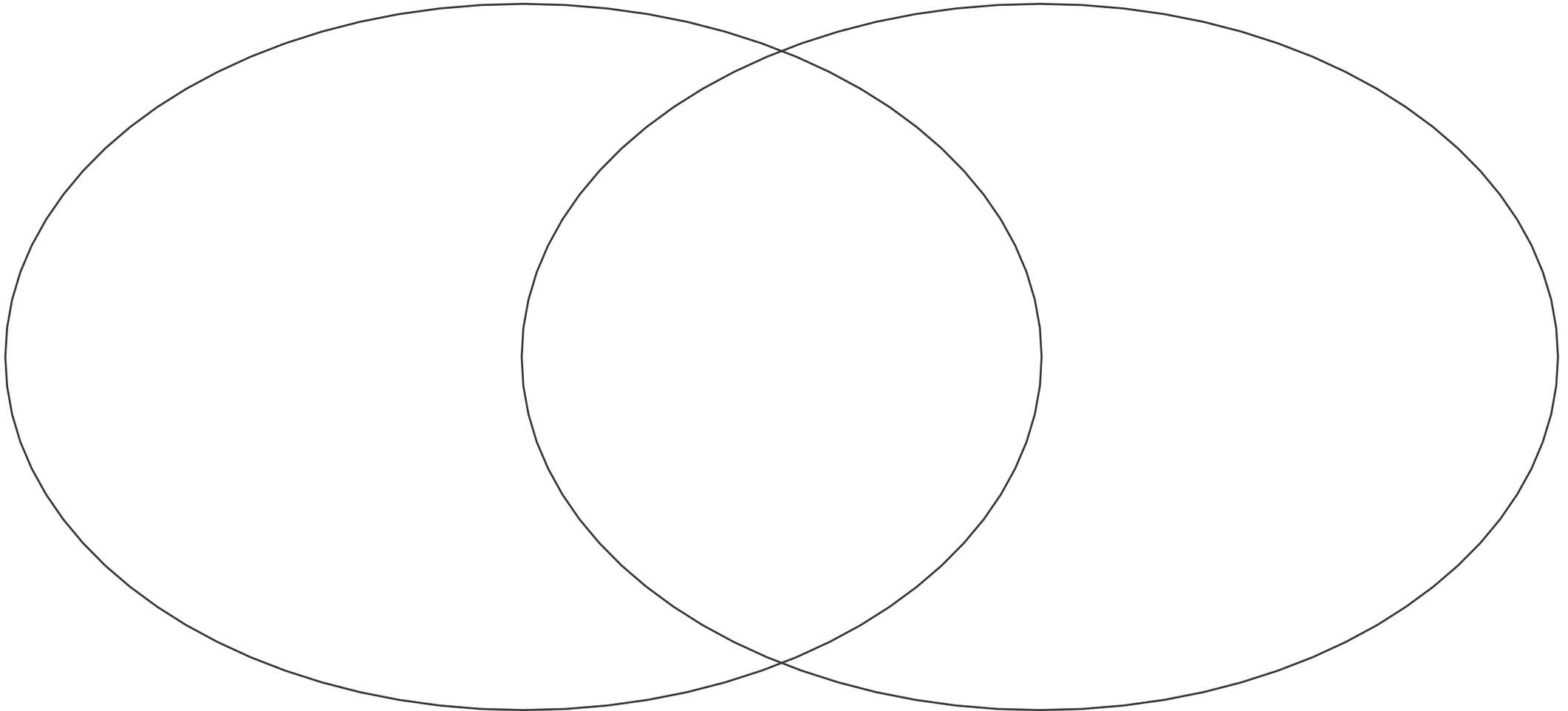
## FACT AND OPINION

Article: “The Alpaca Industry.”

Fact	Opinion

**Make your own True / False statement sheet about alpacas.**

TOPIC: Compare and contrast Alpacas and Sheep



# ATTRIBUTE LISTING ORGANISER

Research and state the attributes of the following animals:

Animal	Gender names	Name of young	Covering	Class [mammal, reptile etc.]	Gestation period
Alpaca					
Chicken					
Sheep					
Frog					
Goat					
Eagle					
Humans					

# WORD WORK

**Match the Adjectives to the Nouns:**

Nouns	Adjectives
Alpaca	Oaten, Lucerne
Fleece	Agricultural, Royal, Local
Water	Adult, young
Shows	Lustrous, soft, crimped
Family	Large, medium, small
Halter	Clean, fresh
Hay	Camelid

**Match the meanings to the words:**

Words	Meanings
Hum	Used to guard sheep during the lambing season.
Hay	Main body of the alpaca's fleece.
Tui	Noise alpacas make.
Cria	Name for a "teenage" alpaca.
Halter	Alpaca fibre.
Water	Back legs.
Fleece	A hembra feeds this to cria.
Saddle	A name for a baby alpaca.
Hocks	Used for leading alpacas.
Milk	All living things need this.
Wether	Used to feed alpacas.