

Project

Help! Our meerkats keep escaping!



Our mammal keeper, Helen, is spending too much time chasing after escapee meerkats – you can help her by designing a new enclosure.

Importantly, we need to avoid it looking like a fortress – instead, the visitors should have a view of the meerkats that gives them the feeling of seeing them in the wild.

Here are some tips

- ◆ Our keepers learn about each animal they keep – its wild diet, social life and habitat – so you will need to research meerkats before you decide how they will live
- ◆ Meerkats can climb, but not up smooth surfaces
- ◆ We try to provide homes that will allow and encourage natural behaviour. Meerkats love to dig burrows in sand, forage for food, and climb up on rocks to watch for predators
- ◆ Our family group will need at least one sleeping box or burrow, which the keepers need to access
- ◆ Space – we would plan to give each meerkat at least 4m², so our group of 9 will need quite a big enclosure

The Task

- ◆ **Research**
- ◆ **Discuss and plan – sketch out a series of options**
- ◆ **Choose**
- ◆ **Draw up a final drawing of the enclosure, and label it with important points so that the keepers can see the choices you have made**

Extension

Make a model of your enclosure – toilet rolls for burrows, pebbles for boulders etc.



NB - our meerkats don't really escape all the time!