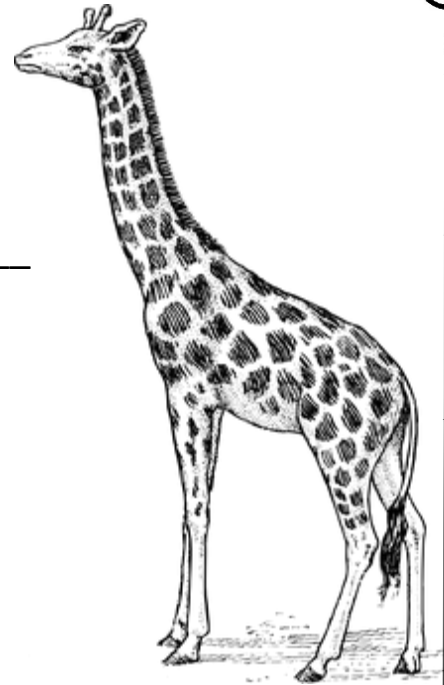# Giraffes

Name: _____

Directions: Read the paragraphs and find the main idea. Write down three supporting details and then summarize the passage.

A giraffe is the tallest land animal and stands about 17 feet tall. Although its neck is very long, it actually has the same number of bones as we do, seven. The only difference is that a giraffe's neck bone might be ten inches long!

All giraffes have two skin-covered horns, called ossicones, on the tops of their heads. The female's ossicones have a small bit of fur on top, while male ossicones are bald. Male giraffes use their horns when they are fighting by throwing their necks against each other.

Giraffes live in Africa's savanna areas where their coat helps them blend in with their surroundings. Their height allows them to reach high branches to eat the leaves that other animals can't reach. Their favorite leaves are from the acacia tree. Most of their day is spent eating and a full grown giraffe eats about 100 pounds of leaves and twigs each day.

Giraffes can go a long time without drinking since acacia leaves have a lot of water in them. When they do get thirsty, giraffes have to bend a long way down to drink from a lake or stream. This is a dangerous time for them as predators, like lions and crocodiles, try to catch giraffes here. Giraffes protect each other by going to the watering hole together and taking turns watching for predators.

Giraffes sleep for less than two hours a day. They often get this sleep from short naps that last just a few minutes. Usually, they sleep either standing up or with their heads resting on their rump.

Female giraffes can have babies when they are 5 years old. They carry the baby for 15 months and give birth while standing up. Newborn giraffes are about 6 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds. An hour after birth the calf can stand up and walk around. At four months, the young giraffes are ready to eat leaves but they continue to nurse until they are six to nine months old. Giraffes live up to 25 years in the wild.