



ANIMALS AT WORK

Animals

Communicating



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WORLD
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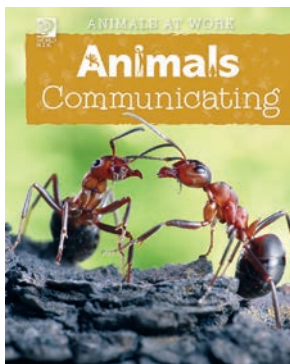
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Two red wood ants communicating in eastern Russia. Ants share information through touch and chemicals called pheromones.

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Introduction

Communication is the giving and getting—exchanging—of information. In communication, someone or something sends out a message, and another receives it. Humans communicate with each other all the time. Sometimes we communicate face to face. Other times, we communicate at a distance by telephone or computer network. Communication can be as simple as a facial expression or as complex as the combination of sounds or signs we call **language**.

Animals communicate all the time, too. Sometimes they communicate to members of their own **species**, and at other times they communicate with other kinds of animals. Animals exchange information using their senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Some animals use one sense more than another to communicate, and many use their senses in combination.

For animals, communication is all about survival. Animals exchange messages to warn each other of danger, to tell each other where to find food, to protect their **territory** or their young, and also to find a **mate**. Mating is an important part of survival. It makes the next generation so that the species can continue.

Humans have developed some amazing ways of communicating—not just through spoken language, but also through writing words and numbers. No other animal uses these methods. But many animals have developed some amazing ways of communicating, sometimes using senses far more developed than those of humans and sometimes exchanging far more complex information than we might imagine. Indeed, some scientists think that some animals have developed ways of communicating that are in some ways like human language.

In this book, you will learn some of the ways and reasons animals communicate, from the simple exchange of warning signals to complex, language-like calls.