

MEDIEVAL BESTIARY

Actual knowledge about beasts—especially animals from faraway places—was very limited in the Middle Ages. A *bestiary* was a book owned by many wealthy nobles of the time that provided a guide to the different beasts of the world. Much of the



information in these books was severely flawed—based on superstition and rumor than on scientific evidence. As with almost everything in the Middle Ages, these beasts were seen as symbols of Christianity with allegorical meaning attached to many of them.

Locate three beasts in a medieval bestiary that have an allegorical or spiritual meaning attached to them. (Avoid any fantastical creatures such as unicorns, dragons, or centaurs.) Use this website to complete your assignment: <http://bestiary.ca/index.html>. Write a short paragraph about each of your three beasts, answering the following questions:

- **What is incorrect about the animal's listing?** The beast might be listed as having supernatural qualities, strange abilities, or bizarre habits that the creature does not have in real life.
- **What is the allegorical/spiritual meaning attached to the beast?**
- **What do you find interesting about the medieval information concerning this animal?**