

## Dear Readers:

The Letter '**G**' can make two sounds. The hard '**G**' makes a sound in words like: **G**ary, **g**row, **g**reat, **g**et.

The soft '**G**' sounds like the Letter 'J'. It is in words like: **G**eorge (2 times), **g**iraffe, and in the middle of the word, **g**erbil.

Note: Some letters are 'outlaws'. They don't follow the rules. The Letter '**g**' in the word, **l**aughed, makes the sound of an 'f'. And, the '**g**' in **g**naw (to chew on) doesn't even make a sound!

# The Giraffe and the Gerbil

Once there was a **g**entle **g**iraffe named **G**eorge.

**G**eorge lived on the **g**rasslands of Africa.

**G**eorge was **g**igantic. He was 18 feet tall!

He had a long **g**raceful neck and **g**reat long legs. His **g**olden skin had orange spots.

**G**eorge liked to **g**naw on the **g**reen leaves of the thorny Acacia tree.

One day George was **g**alloping (as **G**iraffes do) across the savanna **g**rasslands. He stopped at a water hole to drink. **G**eorge stretched his front **l**egs wide to **g**et his long neck down to the water. He stretched his long **t**ongue to get a drink.

Suddenly, he heard a tiny, little voice, crying, "*Help! Help!*"

He looked around, for there is **d**anger on the **g**rasslands of Africa. **A**lligators could be in the water.

Giraffes have to be on **g**uard when they drink.

*“Would you please **g**et your big hoof off of my tail?”* the little voice **g**roaned.

**George** raised his right hoof. And there was a little **g**erbil. The **g**erbil was so small, **George** had to **g**iggle.

*“Funny for you, but not funny for me!”* the tiny **g**erbil said, stomping his little feet on the **g**round. *“But I am **g**rateful to you for letting me **g**o”,* he said. *“What can I do for you?”*

**George** **g**iggled again.

*“What can a little mouse do for a **g**igantic **g**iraffe?”* he laughed.

*“I’m not a mouse! My name is **G**ary **G**erbil!”*

**Gary** **g**azed up at **George** and said, *“I can climb trees and **g**et the best leaves for you”.*

*‘I can stand **g**uard and look out for danger while you drink’, **G**ary promised.*

“We could play ‘Hide-and Seek””, **Gary** suggested.

**George** laughed at that. *“I’m so **g**ig, I could never find a place to hide from a **g**erbil”.*

*But **George** was a very **gentle giraffe**. He thought it would be a **great idea** to have a **gerbil** for a friend. He did not care if **Gary** was so small. **Gary** did not care if **George** was **so tall**.*

*So **George, the tall Giraffe** and **Gary, the small Gerbil** were **glad** to be 'forever friends'! And when George tried to hide behind the Acacia tree, **Gary** pretended that he could not see him at all!*

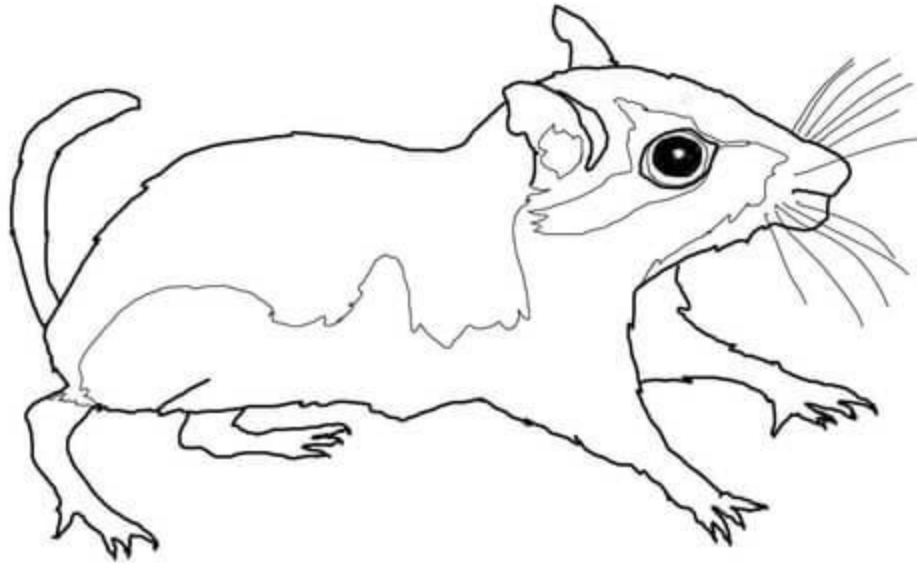
THE END

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### **Did You Know?**

- Giraffes are 14 to 19 feet tall
- Their legs are 6 feet long
- The tail is 8 feet long
- They can weigh 2,400 to 3,000 pounds
- They can run 35 miles per hour
- The heart is 2 feet long and weighs 25 pounds
- Males are 'bulls'; females are 'cows'; and babies are 'calves'
- They have two horns called 'ossicones'
- Babies are 6' tall when born and weigh 150 pounds
- Babies can stand on their legs within one hour of birth
- They sleep only 5-30 minutes in a 24-hour day
- They spend most of their life standing up (including sleeping)
- No two giraffes have the same pattern of spots

# Draw the Gerbil



# Giraffe

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