



# Averaging and Captive Wildlife

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## Startling Statistics

### Intermediate and Junior High and High School Grades

Startling Statistics is a teaching technique that will make dry statistics come alive for your students. At the same time, it will help you teach students about computing the mean, median, and range, while providing practice in reading and visualizing large numbers. The activity (also known as Startling Statements) has been one of the most popular and frequently used activities of the nationwide math motivation workshop Equals, aimed at overcoming math avoidance among young women.

We are happy to introduce this technique to you via our special version titled Captivating Facts.

### The Lesson: Captivating Facts

• **Overview:** In this activity, each student will have a trivia question about captive wildlife pinned to his or her back. Each student will ask five other students to answer the trivia question. Each trivia question can be answered with a number. When a student has received five answers, he or she averages the numbers to come up with one average answer. Later, you reveal the true answer. Usually the answer will be a "startling statistic!"

• **Background:** Each year literally hundreds of thousands of animals and thousands of pet owners suffer the consequences of inappropriate pet choices. For the animal that has managed to survive the cruelty of capture and transportation, the new domestic environment can mean only further stress and suffering. Many people do not realize that wild animals have complex needs that are difficult if not impossible to meet in a home environment. Choosing to keep a wild animal as a pet can cause human suffering as well. Guilt, disappointment, frustration, financial expense, and, unfortunately, disease, injury, and even death can result.

• **Preparation:** Prepare signs or cards to pin or hang on your students' backs. Each card should have on it one of the questions listed below. (Note: Each question can appear on more than one card. For younger students you may want to focus on only four or five questions per session.) Also prepare for later use one set of large cards with the correct answer to each question. Be sure to include the question number.

• **Activity:** 1. Tell students that you will be hanging (or pinning) a trivia question on each one's back. Each will then ask five students to (a) silently read the trivia question and (b) give an answer aloud. Thus, the whole class will be up and walking around, reading questions on one another's backs and giving answers!



