





## Remember This!

Keep this page handy. It will help you keep track of the different definitions and other important information you will learn during this ten-lesson curriculum.

The definition of **personal accountability** is:

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The definition of the **QBQ** is:

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The **three traps that the QBQ helps us eliminate** are:

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The **three guidelines for building a better question** are:

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The QBQ definition of **Ownership** is:

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The QBQ definition of **Humility** is:

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The QBQ definition of **Modeling** is:

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The QBQ definition of **Leadership** is:

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The QBQ definition of **Integrity** is:

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**Reflection: Lesson #1 I CAN MAKE EXCELLENT CHOICES!**

1. When have I said "I have to!" or "I can't!"?
2. What do I think about the concept that "we always have a choice"?
3. Assuming it's true, why can it be hard to admit that I really do always have a choice?

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LESSON #1



**Reflection: Lesson #2 I CAN BE ACCOUNTABLE!**

1. What stands out to me about Jacob's actions?
2. How can asking better questions, or QBQs, help me go above and beyond—choosing to do something that isn't expected of me?

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Lesson #2



## Reflection: Lesson #3 I CAN BE POSITIVE!

### STRESS

1. What are some things I have felt “stressed” about recently?
2. Why have I been feeling this way?

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Lesson #3



# Reflection: Lesson #3 I CAN BE POSITIVE!

## CHANGE

- 1. What changes am I facing right now?
- 2. What was my first reaction to these changes?
- 3. Did I ask lousy questions or QBQs? How will I use the QBQ to tackle changes I face in the future?

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Lesson #3



**Reflection: Lesson #4 I CAN GET STUFF DONE!**

- 1. What have I learned about procrastination?
- 2. What have I learned about the importance of taking risks?
- 3. What is one thing I've been putting off that I will take action on and when will I do it?

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## Reflection: Lesson #5 I CAN TAKE OWNERSHIP!

1. What “mess” in my life do I need to stop blaming others for and begin to say “I own it!”?
2. What steps do I need to take to move forward in this situation?

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**Reflection: Lesson #6 I CAN WORK ON ME!**

1. Who in my life do I wish I could change?
2. What would I change about this person?
3. What might this person want to change about me?

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# Reflection: Lesson #6 I CAN WORK ON ME!

Why is it more effective to focus on myself than try to fix others or control the circumstances around me?

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- 1. Am I a person of integrity?
- 2. Do I "walk my talk"?
- 3. In what areas of my life do I have values that I talk about but have trouble making my actions match?

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# Reflection: Summary Session NOW THAT I KNOW THE QBQ!

# I OWN It!

What is the **single most important idea** I will take away from this *I Own It!* course?

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How will I **apply it** in my life?

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What **changes** will I make in my life?

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What will be the **benefits** of making these changes?

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**Will I do it?**

Circle **Yes** or **No**

—it's always *my* individual choice to practice personal accountability using the QBQ!

**Other important information** I want to remember:

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## Lesson #3 CASE STUDY: WILLOW THE WHINER

This case study is presented in “Reader’s Theater” format, with four parts: Narrator, Willow, Dad, and Hailey.

**Willow** (in a super whiny voice): Why doesn’t anyone understand me?

**Narrator:** This question rolled through Willow’s mind many times a day. Willow was the youngest child in a family of all daughters; her two older sisters were close in age and super tight. They did everything together.

**Willow** (with a pouty attitude): I’m such an outcast. I feel so left out and misunderstood.

**Narrator:** One Saturday morning, Willow stumbled out of bed and entered the kitchen to find her two sisters and her parents enjoying breakfast together.

**Willow:** Why didn’t anyone tell me we were having breakfast?

**Dad** (incredibly chipper): Good morning to you, too, Sunshine! Pull up a chair and enjoy this beautiful day by starting with a stack of Mom’s famous pancakes.

**Narrator:** Willow rolled her eyes and flopped into a chair. Reaching for the syrup, she mumbled while she doused her pancakes with liquid sugar.

**Willow:** Nobody ever tells me anything. Why am I left out of all the conversations? Why do we have to have blueberry pancakes? I hate warm mushy berries. Yuck.

**Narrator:** Willow’s parents eyed each other, both aware of her infamous attitude. They decided to let it go ... for now.

**Dad:** Well, we’re just glad you could join us. I sure love family breakfasts together! What should we all talk about on this fine Saturday morning?

**Hailey:** Well, I’m working on this skit for my literature class, and it’s going to be super funny. Let me tell you the plot and opening scene—it’s going to be great!

**Narrator:** By the end of Hailey’s story, the whole family, except for Willow, was rolling with laughter. The skit certainly will be very funny!

**Willow:** Why didn’t you ask for my help preparing your skit? I am the one who does drama.

**Hailey:** Well, Willow, to be honest, you’ve been a little hard to talk with lately, and haven’t seemed very happy, so I just decided to leave you alone and work on it myself.

**Narrator:** The family went on to discuss the upcoming family reunion. This year, it was to be held at their house and everyone (except Willow, of course) was enjoying being involved in the planning. Willow's mom and oldest sister, Megan, were in charge of food. Hailey was in charge of games. And Willow's dad was in charge of setup and cleanup.

**Dad:** Willow, why don't you plan on helping me with setting up and cleaning up?

**Willow:** Why do I have to be on setup and cleanup? That's no fun at all! Why doesn't anyone ask my opinion on anything?

**Narrator:** Willow whined, slouched in her chair, and dejectedly chugged some orange juice. By now, the entire family was a little tired of Willow's whining. Her victim mentality was a drain on everyone around her. Hailey wanted to try to help Willow with her attitude. She pulled Willow into her bedroom ...

**Hailey:** Willow, I know you think I ignore you and you feel left out of the family, but try to just listen to me for a minute . . .

### Discussion Questions:

- If you were Hailey, what advice would you give to Willow?
- What "Why" questions did Willow ask over the course of the morning?
- How did Willow's complaining cause her family to respond to her?
- What could Willow change in her thinking to avoid complaining? What QBQs could she ask instead? **(Remember: QBQs begin with "What" or "How," contain an "I," and focus on action!)**
- How might Willow's victim mindset continue to affect her later in life?

When Levi graduated high school, he decided not to jump right into college life. So he accepted an internship in a different state.

In August, he loaded his car and moved across the country. Upon arriving and settling in, he was reminded of the standards of the internship. He needed to find a part-time job, pass a cleaning inspection every week of his housing, put in certain office hours, and manage specific tasks on a daily basis.

Levi was told his first task was to submit fifteen job applications by the end of the week. He responded with, "I'll do twenty!" The following Monday his internship director asked him how many he'd done. He responded truthfully with, "Seven." He also failed his first cleaning inspection, and was reprimanded for being late to the office three out of the four days that week.

His director reminded him of the standards he had agreed to as part of this program, and asked him why he wasn't putting in very much effort.

- What are some lousy questions Levi might respond with in this situation? Brainstorm a list with your group, remembering that lousy questions begin with "Why," "When," and "Who," and lead us to blaming, complaining (or victim thinking), and procrastination.

My family and I were taking a drive one Sunday afternoon near our home in Colorado. We passed an open field that caught our attention—because it was littered with newspapers. The strong, swirling Denver winds were blowing newspapers all over the field. If you’ve never been to Denver, you will just have to imagine the gusty winds that we have there! Picture a large open field and hundreds of newspapers. Pretty much a disaster, right?

Then we noticed in the midst of the swirling papers, a man. As we watched, this man tumbled out of his wheelchair onto the field and started dragging himself around, grabbing papers as he went. My sisters and brother and I all agreed: We needed to get out and help.

My dad pulled over and the whole Miller family got out of the car and started chasing wayward papers. Once the job was complete, we gathered around the man and asked him what had happened. His name was Brian and he had been in a car accident that left him unable to walk. But he could drive, and he was a newspaper delivery man.

He had gotten home that day and realized a bundle of newspapers was missing from the back of his pickup. He drove back down the road and found the field littered in papers. My dad asked him, “Were you planning on cleaning up the whole field all by yourself?” Brian said, “Of course! I couldn’t just leave them. It’s my mess.”

It’s my mess. *That* is a statement of accountability. My relationships aren’t what I want them to be. It’s my mess. My grades are not as good as they could be. It’s my mess. My life is not turning out as I thought it would. It’s my mess.

When I say “It’s my mess!” I’m taking ownership—instead of making excuses or blaming others. I’m really just saying “I own it!” I own my relationships. I own my success in school. I own my life.

Kristin E. Lindeen (speaker and daughter of *QBO!* author John G. Miller)

## Discuss Questions:

- What does this definition of “ownership” mean to you?
- Is blame really such a bad thing? Why or why not?
- How do we practice ownership?
- What does ownership look like? Describe the thoughts and actions of a person who takes ownership.
- For what specific situation in your life will you now begin to say “It’s my mess” and “I own it!”?

**Lesson #6 CASE STUDY: TIM THE TEAMMATE**

This case study is presented in “Reader’s Theater” format, with four parts: Narrator, Tim, Kendra, and Matthew.

**Narrator:** Tim, Kendra, and Sara have a project due for school.

**Tim:** I can’t wait to get this group project done. It’ll feel so good to have it turned in!

**Kendra:** I agree. Have you heard from Sara? Are they coming to this meeting?

**Narrator:** Ding! Tim gets a text ...

**Tim:** Oh, it’s Sara ... Ugh, she says she hasn’t gotten to her part of the project yet because she’s sick. She’s asking if you and I can cover for her.

**Kendra:** Oh, man, that’s so annoying. Well, I guess we’ll have to see what we can do.

**Tim:** Yeah—being a part of a team is a pain sometimes. At least we get graded on our individual parts and it’s not all tied to the overall group grade.

**Kendra:** For sure. Are you heading to lunch?

**Tim:** Yeah—let’s sit together and figure out what we’re going to do about the project.

**Narrator:** In the cafeteria, Tim overhears Matthew, Sara’s boyfriend, talking with a friend.

**Matthew:** Dude, last night, Sara and I were at this epic party—it was totally sweet! We had so much crazy fun. I wish we could party like that all the time!

**Tim:** Hey, Matt—couldn’t help but overhear. Sounds like you had a great time last night! Where’s Sara today? Don’t you usually eat lunch together?

**Matthew:** Sara is home today—I think she called in sick. Pretty sure she’s just super exhausted and trying to catch up on homework.

**Narrator:** Tim swallows his frustration and ignores his intense desire to roll his eyes in disgust, and turns his attention back to his lunch. Kendra sits down with her food.

**Tim:** Guess what I just found out?

**Kendra:** What?



**Tim:** Sara isn't sick at all. She didn't get her part of the project done because she was out at a party with her boyfriend, Matt.

**Kendra:** For real? Seriously. That's super annoying.

**Tim:** I know!

**Narrator:** Tim loses his self-control and starts ranting and asking lousy questions.

**Tim:** I just hate group projects! Why can't Sara get her act together? Who put me in this group with these lazy people? Why are dating couples so insensitive? When will someone step up and help?! And why does Matt get all the pretty girls?!!

**Narrator:** Kendra is a little taken aback by Tim's sudden outburst and scoots a little bit further away from him.

**Kendra:** Umm . . . okay yeah—I'm gonna go. See you later in class, Tim . . .

### Discussion Questions:

- What would be a better way for Tim to respond?
- What questions could he ask instead?
- How should he approach Sara about her part of the project?
- How does the team benefit when each member says "I own it!"?

Dorothy worked at Chick-Fil-A, a fast food restaurant. One day a high school soccer team stopped at Dorothy's store for lunch on their way to a tournament. The team had to eat quickly and the coach was rushing the girls to finish up. Katherine, one of the players, scrambled to throw away her trash and race to the bus. It wasn't until they were ten minutes down the highway that Katherine realized what she had done. She couldn't believe she had done this again! Her mom was never going to forgive her. Katherine took a deep breath and called her mom to let her know what had happened. In a slightly frantic voice, she said, "Mom, I'm soooooo sorry." "Katherine, what's the matter?" "Well ... I know you're going to be upset and I promised I would never do it again but—well—I lost my retainer!"

Katherine's mom assured her daughter it would be okay and that she would contact Chick-Fil-A. She called the restaurant and Dorothy answered: "Thank you for calling Chick-Fil-A, this is Dorothy. How may I help you?" Katherine's mom explained the situation and asked if Dorothy wouldn't mind checking around. "My pleasure!" Dorothy responded.

Dorothy put Katherine's mom on hold and asked around, but nobody had seen the retainer. So Katherine's mom asked Dorothy if she wouldn't mind setting aside the trash bags, since Katherine was planning to drive to the restaurant and dig through them—she just couldn't afford to replace that retainer again! Dorothy said, "My pleasure, ma'am. Well, actually, I could just look through the trash for you, if you'd like? It would save you a trip." (Now, I don't know about you, but I would have a hard time offering to dig through fast food trash for someone else's retainer!) Katherine's mom said, "Oh no, dear, thanks but that's okay—I'll come down and do the dirty work myself."

So Katherine's mom drove to Chick-Fil-A and upon arriving, she found Dorothy, elbow deep in fast food trash—and she was smiling! Can you imagine being so happy to serve? Even though Dorothy had been told she didn't need to search the trash, she chose to do so anyway.

You know, I gotta tell 'ya: I'm pretty selfish sometimes. I find myself offering to go the extra mile, but hoping and praying that the person will let me off the hook! That way I look like a nice person, but I don't actually have to do the dirty work. And in this case the customer did let Dorothy off the hook. But she chose to search through the trash anyway. She could have asked questions like, "Why did I answer the phone?" "When is someone else going to help the customers?" "Why are customers such a pain?" "Who scheduled me on this shift?" And of course, this one: "Why can't these teens keep their retainers in their mouths?!"

I don't know exactly what Dorothy was thinking, but I can guess that she simply asked questions like, "What can I do to contribute?" "How can I serve this woman and her daughter?" "What can I do to make a difference?" That's personal accountability—it's as simple as that.

Oh, and I don't know how you've been picturing Dorothy this whole time, but she was nineteen. Dorothy proves that young people do want to serve, can go the extra mile, and have a lot to contribute. You too can practice the QBO!

Kristin E. Lindeen (*QBO!* speaker and daughter of *QBO!* author John G. Miller)

### Discussion Questions:

- What message do you take away from the story of Dorothy?
- Share an example of a time when you received "above and beyond" service from someone. How did this make you feel?
- In what areas of your life do you feel you need a greater attitude of service?
- Who in your life can you serve today—and how? Be specific.
- Are there situations where it's other people's job to serve, or should we always say "I own it!"?

When my sister Tara was eleven and I was thirteen, we often fought. We are best friends now and I couldn't live without her, but back then . . . watch out! It had been one of those fights where I stuck my foot in my mouth, she started crying, and I rolled my eyes and slammed my door. And what did she do? Of course—she told our mom.

So Mom sits us both down at the kitchen table. I had a bad attitude and proceeded to sit with my arms crossed and eyes averted. Tara next to me just sniffled.

In spite of my efforts to ignore her, Mom caught my attention because she didn't yell. She didn't list all the things we'd done that were mean to each other . . . she just looked at us and said:

*“Kristin, Tara, you are on the verge of your teenage years. You are going through a lot of changes. Now, the world is going to tell you how it thinks you should be, simply because you've turned thirteen. Our culture says that from the minute you turn thirteen until you reach your mid-twenties, you will be disrespectful, stubborn, and selfish. Most adults seem to think kids turn into some sort of inhuman creatures the minute they turn thirteen. I want to tell you girls today—you don't have to be these things. You can either choose to conform to the stereotypes of teens that this culture has, or you can choose leadership and rise above.”*

And as disinterested as I tried to look that day, Mom had struck a chord in my heart; I wanted to be different. I didn't want to simply conform, but rather I wanted to choose to be a leader—starting right then at that young age. And now I like to pass that message along. Do not give in to the pressure of teenage stereotypes. Just because you're a teen doesn't mean you have to suddenly rebel, hate your parents, and complain about how unfair life is.

Certainly, teens are in a naturally more self-focused phase of life—but come on now, is there any phase in life that isn't somewhat self-centered? I don't think that's a teenage thing; I think it's a human thing. That doesn't magically disappear when you turn twenty. It's something we all learn to overcome. Leaders overcome these stereotypes. Leaders choose to control their thoughts, and practice personal accountability. Leadership starts at any age—so choose to influence others in a positive way now!

Kristin E. Lindeen (speaker and daughter of *QBQ!* author John G. Miller)

**Discussion Questions:**

- Have you ever been labeled as being a “typical teen”? How does this make you feel?
- What are five traits of leadership or characteristics of leaders?
- Is leadership as simple as influencing the people around us? Why or why not?
- Some say leaders are born that way and that leadership is not for everyone. What do you think? Are leaders born or raised? Can you choose to be a leader? Can you learn to be a leader? How?

1. You just received your algebra test back and see that you've got an F. Which question below might you ask yourself?
  - Why does this teacher keep failing me?
  - ▲ When will someone tutor me more effectively?
  - Who makes up such horrible tests?N/A
2. It's the start of the semester and you're not sure if you should take Yearbook or Physics. Your parents don't seem to have an opinion—and you really need help making this decision. What question would you ask?
  - Why don't my parents care about this decision?
  - Who says I need Physics anyway?
  - ▲ When is someone going to just tell me what classes to take?N/A
3. You don't like your manager at your part-time job. After a frustrating day when you were yelled at for being late, how do you respond?
  - Why is life so unfair?
  - Who does this guy think he is, anyway?
  - ▲ When will someone get me up on time?N/A
4. Last week you forgot to take the garbage cans out to the curb and your parents got mad. What question might you ask yourself?
  - ▲ When will my parents lay off me?
  - Who is going to remind me to take out the trash from now on?
  - Why do I have to do so many chores?N/A
5. You need money for tickets to Homecoming. Your parents told you that you have to earn it yourself. How do you respond?
  - Who decided to charge so much for Homecoming?
  - Why are my parents so unreasonable?
  - ▲ When is someone going to give me a job?N/A
6. You're overwhelmed thinking about college and your future. How do you frame your thoughts on this?
  - ▲ When is my school counselor going to give me more guidance?
  - Why is college so expensive?
  - Who made the applications so complicated?N/A

7. One of your closest friends hasn't been speaking to you lately. You know he is mad at you, but you're not sure why. How do you think about this conflict?
- Who caused this problem in the first place?
  - Why are my friends so hard to get along with?
  - ▲ When am I going to find better friends who don't cause so much drama?
- N/A
8. You've heard that someone said something about you behind your back. The rumor is spreading quickly and you're not sure how to stop it. What do you ask?
- ▲ When is someone else going to stand up for me and shut this rumor down?
  - Why are other kids so mean?
  - Who's doing this to me?
- N/A
9. You didn't make the varsity team last year, but you practiced really hard and improved while on JV. It's your senior year and you think you've got a shot at varsity. The team list was just posted and you still didn't make the team. How do you respond?
- Who influenced the coach to side against me?
  - Why is it so hard to make the team?
  - ▲ When will I catch a break?
- N/A
10. You think that the teacher was not clear on the requirements for a homework assignment. You did the best you could, but ended up receiving a poor grade. How do you respond?
- Who's going to fix this?
  - ▲ When will we get better teachers at this school?
  - Why is my teacher such a lousy communicator?
- N/A

### Add up your answers

How many ● questions did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

How many ▲ questions did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

How many ■ questions did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

### Key

● = "Blame" questions

▲ = "Procrastination" questions

■ = "Complaining" or "Victim Thinking" questions

*The shape with the biggest number just might be the "trap" that you struggle with most.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Choose one person you look up to. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Prepare a two-minute presentation on this person, answering these questions:  
What is this person's name? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
How do you know (or know about) this person? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
How old is this person? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is this person's profession? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Why do you admire this person? \_\_\_\_\_  
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What qualities does this person possess that you'd like to have too? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
3. Bring a picture of this person to class, mounted on an 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 14 inch piece of paper. On the front of this poster, write this person's name, profession, and qualities you admire, as well as your own name. After you have completed this handout, staple it to the back of your poster presentation. Be as creative as you'd like with the presentation of your project!



*“Leadership, more than anything else, is about the way we think. It’s a moment-to-moment disciplining of our thoughts. It’s about practicing personal accountability and choosing to make a positive contribution, no matter what our role ...The same principle holds true: If we think like leaders, we are leaders.”*

John G. Miller, *QBQ!* Chapter 31

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John G. Miller, *QBQ!* Chapter 31

## Summary Session Handout: FAVORITE "I CAN!" STATEMENTS

You will receive a sheet of paper and supplies will be provided.

1. Looking at the "I Can!" poster, choose the statements that mean the most to you. Write them on the lines below.
2. Beside each of the "I Can" statements that you listed below, write how you will take action, or "own it." For example, "I can . . . serve others!" by volunteering at a food pantry, reading to younger students, cleaning up trash at public parks, etc.
3. Using provided supplies, create your own "I Can!" poster. Somewhere on your poster, write "Now that I know the QBQ! . . ." as well as your chosen "I Can" statements, and your specific ways to take action on those statements.
4. Be creative! Decorate your poster however you like!

**My favorite "I Can" statements are ...**

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## References

All material is based on *QBQ! The Question Behind the Question* by John G. Miller, published by Putnam, a Penguin imprint.

### Images in Lesson #1:

- Goathead: [www.tandem-bicycle-central.com/image-files/goathead.jpg](http://www.tandem-bicycle-central.com/image-files/goathead.jpg)  
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### Images in Lesson #6:

- Eagle: [www.allaboutwildlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/BaldEagle.jpg](http://www.allaboutwildlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/BaldEagle.jpg)  
Photo: NASA/Gary Rothstein
- Dolphin: [www.theoriginaldolphinwatch.com/images/dolphin1b.jpg](http://www.theoriginaldolphinwatch.com/images/dolphin1b.jpg)  
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- Lion: [http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/004/cache/african-lion-male\\_436\\_600x450.jpg](http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/004/cache/african-lion-male_436_600x450.jpg)  
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- Giraffe: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/giraffe/?source=A-to-Z>  
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