



THE OSTRICH STORY

The Ostrich: From Egg to Feather

The life of an ostrich begins with a **giant egg**, the largest of any bird in the world. These eggs are usually laid by the female ostrich in a simple nest dug in the sand. Sometimes, several female ostriches will lay their eggs in the same nest!

The mother and father ostrich take turns sitting on the eggs to keep them warm, a process called **incubation**. This important job can take about 42 days. Inside the egg, a tiny baby ostrich slowly grows and develops. Finally, after many weeks, the baby chick is ready to **hatch**. It uses a small bump on its beak to break through the hard shell. This is a tiring process for the little chick!

When the baby ostrich emerges, it is small and covered in soft, fluffy down **feathers**. These first feathers help to keep the chick warm. The baby ostriches, called chicks, stay close to their parents, who protect them and teach them how to find food.

As the chicks grow, their downy feathers begin to fall out and are replaced by stronger, more adult-like **feathers**. These new feathers are still soft but much bigger. They will eventually grow into the long, distinctive feathers that adult ostriches are known for. It takes many months for an ostrich to grow to its full size and have all of its adult feathers. These feathers are not only important for how the ostrich looks, but they also help to keep it warm or cool and play a role in attracting a mate when the ostrich is older. So, from a giant egg to magnificent feathers, the life cycle of an ostrich is truly amazing!

Activity 1: Life Cycle Sequencing

Read the sentences about the ostrich life cycle. Write the numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) in the order that they happen.

- _____ The baby chick uses its beak to break the shell.
- _____ An adult ostrich lays a giant egg.
- _____ The mother and father ostrich sit on the eggs.
- _____ The chick's first soft feathers grow out.
- _____ The adult ostrich has long, distinctive feathers.
- _____ The egg grows inside for 42 days.

Activity 2: Vocabulary Matching

Match the words from the passage to their meanings. Draw a line from the word to its meaning.

Words	Meanings
1. giant	a. a process of keeping eggs warm until they hatch
2. incubation	b. the soft coverings on a bird's body
3. hatch	c. very, very big
4. feathers	d. a baby ostrich
5. chick	e. to come out of an egg

Teacher's Key

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- 2 The mother and father ostrich sit on the eggs.
- 5 The chick's first soft feathers grow out.
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- 3 The egg grows inside for 42 days.

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