

Never Badger a Badger!

The word “badger” usually means “to annoy.” The American badger is one animal that no one would want to annoy. When annoyed or frightened, the badger is an aggressive and ferocious fighter.

This short, shaggy animal will stand up to anything when provoked. The adaptations it has for feeding quickly become tools for battle. The badger has front feet that are partially webbed and have long, curved claws. Its hind feet have shovel-like claws. It has strong jaws and sharp teeth. Badgers hunt by digging up prairie dogs, ground squirrels, and mice. A badger can use its short, powerful front legs to move earth with amazing speed. When threatened, a badger can dig a hole and disappear to safety

in as little as one minute. When retreat is impossible, the badger will use its claws and teeth to fight.

Badgers are native to the prairies and plains of North America. Like most prairie animals, they burrow and live in dens underground. They are more active at night than in the daytime. They are usually solitary animals. There may be less than five badgers in a two-square-mile area. They will pair up briefly during the mating season. Then, the pair separates and the female badger is left to care for the young on her own.



Illustration by Helen Zane Jensen, ©2009

