Making an ethogram:

An ethogram is a brief description of a behaviour (you can leave out necessary bodily functions or simple locomotion), described so that a) someone else observing the same animal could identify the same behaviour and call it the same thing, and b) so that you can make reference to the description from the body of your work without having to repeat the description of the behaviour. It is preferable to put the ethogram in table form, and including diagrams is a good idea.

Do:

1. Name the behaviour
2. Attempt to sketch what the behaviour looks like
3. Verbally describe the behaviour, the motions and sounds involved, and give the context in which it occurred
4. Say whether the animal was alone, or directed the behaviour at another individual
5. Give the duration of the behaviour. How long does an animal take to complete this act?
6. Look at examples of ethograms in the literature
7. Refer to the named behaviour in the body of your written paragraph

Don’t:

1. Indicate which focus animal is doing the behaviour and when. An ethogram is a general catalogue of possible behaviours that an animal could do. Your specific individual observations don’t belong here
2. Speculate why the animal is doing that behaviour
3. Anthropomorphize (this means to project human motives and feelings onto animals).
4. Repeat description of behaviours from the ethogram in the body of your written paragraph