



TARGETED INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

- ✓ Reading Fluency and Comprehension
- ✓ Spelling
- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics
- ✓ Literacy Knowledge
- ✓ Executive Function and Study Skills



Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency and Comprehension

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Thank you,

Mark Pennington

Introduction

The **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency and Comprehension** program provides 43 expository **Animal Articles** for modelled and repeated reading fluency practice and comprehension questions and vocabulary for each of the articles.

Students complete **The “Pets” Fluency Assessment (pages 2–4)** and the teacher places students in three groups based upon grade-level fluency norms and program challenge levels.

The Animal Fluency Articles and SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets

Students practice along with modelled readings and complete repeated reading practice with the 43 **Animal Fluency Articles (pages 5–54)**. Each of these high-interest expository articles are 350–450 words. Readers learn about the physical characteristics of the animal, the animal's habitat, what the animal eats, the animal's family, interesting facts, and the status of the species, whether endangered or not.

The articles are leveled in a unique pyramid design: the first two paragraphs are at an adjusted third grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) reading level (after deleting a few key multi-syllabic words such as *carnivores* or long animal names such as *armadillos*); the next two paragraphs are at the fifth grade reading level; and the last two are at the seventh grade reading level. The reader begins practice at an easier level to build confidence and then moves to more difficult academic language and sentence length.

Each article is displayed and has been recorded on YouTube videos at three different reading speeds (Level A at 95-115 words per minute; Level B at 115-135 words per minute; and Level C at 135-155 words per minute) to provide modelled readings at each of your students' challenge levels. Visit <http://bit.ly/1HaRC3h> to access the 129 YouTube videos.

The program also features detailed instructions on how to provide modelled and repeated reading practice without the digital readings in reading fluency groups. Both the digital and non-digital instructional options work quite well.

Following reading fluency practice, students complete the 43 **SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets (pages 55-107)** as **independent practice**. The worksheets feature the same **Animal Fluency Articles** with vocabulary and embedded, inferential questions. Each worksheet includes five inferential questions—one question for each of the five reading comprehension strategies and their corresponding **SCRIP Comprehension Cues**. The SCRIP acronym stands for Summarize, Connect, Re-think, Interpret, and Predict.

The questions are placed in the right-hand margin and require students to interact with the article. Students answer the questions in the margins. Additionally, three key vocabulary words are **boldfaced**. Students should define and use vocabulary words in original context clue sentences on the back of their worksheets.



The “Pets” Fluency Assessment

Teacher Notes

As a critical component of reading diagnosis, teachers need to hear their students read. This assessment allows the teacher to assess reading ability and provides a baseline fluency rate. Additionally, the results will help the teacher narrow down the reading level of students to inform selection of books for independent reading practice.

The “Pets” fluency passage is leveled in the same pyramid design as the **Animal Fluency Articles**, but with even greater specificity. The first paragraph is at the first grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) reading level; the second paragraph is at the second grade level; the third paragraph is at the third grade level; the fourth paragraph is at the fourth grade level; the fifth paragraph is at the fifth grade level; the sixth paragraph is at the sixth grade level; and the seventh paragraph is at the seventh grade level. Thus, the reader begins practice at an easier level that builds confidence and then moves to more difficult academic language through successive approximation. As the student reads the fluency passage, the teacher will be able to note the reading levels at which the student has a high degree of accuracy and automaticity. Automaticity refers to the ability of the reader to read effortlessly without stumbling or sounding-out words.

- The reading level in which the student has 95–100% accuracy with a high degree of automaticity indicates an independent level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read on their own. Help students to choose books at this level for independent reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has 85–94% accuracy with a medium degree of automaticity indicates an instructional level of reading. In other words, this reading level is appropriate for students to read with teacher or parent assistance. Help students to choose books at this level for instructional reading practice.
- The reading level in which the student has less than 85% accuracy with a low degree of automaticity indicates a frustration level of reading. In other words, this reading level is inappropriate for effective reading practice.

Preparation and Organization

Laminate one copy of the “Pets” Fluency Assessment for students. Run off enough copies of the same assessment for each student. Use a stopwatch to ensure that the two-minute timings will be accurate. Set aside a table or two desks in a corner of the room or just outside the door, if practical. Have desks or chairs facing each other.

Announce to the class that you will have students quietly read to you for two-minute reading fluency timings. Say, “Please don’t interrupt the fluency timings, unless there is an emergency. We want to complete these timings quickly, so this is how we will organize things: I will pick one student to read. The first to read will be _____. Please sit here. When _____ has finished, she will use the stopwatch to time the next reader, who will be _____. From now on, the student who does the timing will quietly go get the next reader. Any questions?”



Fluency Assessment Directions and Scoring

1. Say—"I'm going to have you read out loud for two minutes. Read quickly, but say the words correctly. The title of this article is 'Pets.' Point to the first word of the article on the student's copy and say 'Ready, begin.'"
2. As the student reads, mark a slash on the teacher's copy for mispronounced words, omitted words, added words, and words not correctly pronounced within three seconds. Say the word for the student after three seconds of silence or attempted pronunciation and then say "Next," if the student does not continue to read. Be consistent in test administration regarding marking (or not marking) dialect differences, word repetitions, pre-practice of difficult words, reversals, and self-corrections.
3. Mark a bracket after the last word the student reads correctly when two minutes have elapsed. Say, "Stop." Record the total number of words read, less errors at the bottom left of the page and the name of the student. Say, "Thank you. Now, you will be the timer. When I say 'begin,' push this button. After two minutes, say 'stop,' and push the button again. After the timing has been completed, say "Please go tell _____ that he or she is 'on deck.'"

Do Your Students Need Reading Fluency Practice?

Students reading less than the number of words per minute (correctly), as indicated by the following Fall Grade Level Norms, need the modeled reading and repeated reading practice provided in the **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency** program. Note that the "Pets" Fluency Assessment is a two-minute timing, *not* the one-minute numbers in the Fall Grade Level Norms, so student words per minute must be divided by two to determine mastery, according to these criteria.

Reading Fluency Grade Level Norms: Words Correct per Minute

Grade	Fall Mastery Levels	Winter	Spring
4	99 / 158	112	98–118
5	105 / 168	118	118–128
6	115 / 184	132	135–145
7	147 / 235	158	157–167
8–Adult	156 / 250	167	166–171

Adapted by Timothy Rasinski from Hasbrouck, J. E. & Tindal, G. (1992). Curriculum-based oral reading fluency forms for students in Grades 2 through 5. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, (Spring), 41-44 and Howe, K. B. & Shinn, M. M. (2001). Standard reading assessment passages (RAPS) for use in general outcome measurements: A manual describing development and technical features. Eden Prairie, MN: Edformations. Mastery levels and adult extrapolation by Mark Pennington.

"Pets" Fluency Assessment

Name _____

11 Pets are nice. Pets live with us. They can be good
 21 friends. Pets make people happy. They can be very fun.
 32 Some pets are very smart. Many can be trained to do
 44 what people say. Pets may come to us when we call. Some
 57 can do special tricks. Some even seem to talk to us with a
 63 "bark," a "meow," or a "chirp."
 74 Many people enjoy life more with pets. Pets can be good
 86 company. Pets can help people feel less lonely. Some pets help us
 96 feel better. Pets can even help us get more exercise.
 109 Not all animals make good pets. Most wild animals are afraid of people.
 125 Others could be dangerous, like large cats or bears. It would be too hard to care
 141 for some animals. They might need a special place to live or special food to eat.
 154 Pets and owners must make a good match. People need to think carefully
 170 about some things before getting a pet. A pet owner needs to have a good place
 188 for a pet to live. A small apartment may be perfect for a fish or hamster, but not
 205 for a large dog or cat. Also, some pets cost more to keep than others. Large pets
 219 eat more than small ones, and their cost of medical care can be expensive.
 234 People need to consider how much time they will be able to spend with their
 244 pets. Pets need plenty of fun and attention to stay happy.
 259 The most popular pets worldwide are dogs and cats. There are slightly more cats than
 275 dogs. Birds, hamsters, turtles, snakes, lizards, and fish are also the pets of choice for many
 290 people. In the last few years pets have become more "exotic." Many people are now keeping
 303 ferrets and monkeys as pets. Most local governments have laws restricting which pets are
 309 acceptable in their communities.
 325 Pet owners need to be responsible with their pets. Adult pets need to be spayed or
 338 neutered to prevent unplanned litters. According to the Humane Society, over three million
 354 unwanted pets are put to sleep each year. Also, mixed breed cats and dogs can make
 371 wonderful pets. In fact, some of the best pets can be adopted from local animal shelters at
 383 little cost. Pets are valuable friends and need our very best care.

	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

Targeted Independent Reading Fluency Practice Directions

Differentiated Instruction with Flexible Reading Fluency Groups

For students who need reading fluency practice, as indicated by the Fall Grade Level Norms, refer to the student scores on the “Pets” Fluency Assessment, and assign students to one of three flexible reading fluency groups (A, B, or C), according to the following criteria.

Assigned Fluency Level Groups	“Pets” Score Two Minute Assessment	Assessment Words per Minute	Challenge Level Words per Minute
Level A	< 190	<95	95–115
Level B	191–239	96–119	115–135
Level C	>240	>120	135–155

Keep these groups flexible, as some students will progress rapidly and may need to be reassigned to reflect their improved reading fluency scores. Also, separate students who do not work well together.

The **Targeted Independent Practice: Reading Fluency** program includes two instructional options for independent fluency practice: 1. Digital: YouTube modeled readings and practice 2. Non-Digital: Reading fluency groups modeled readings and practice. Note that teachers may choose to do a hybrid of the digital and non-digital resources and instruction.

Instructional Materials and Resources

1. Use a timer or the stopwatch app on your phone to time fluency readings.
2. Create fluency folders for each student. Select and print the appropriate Reading Fluency Timing Charts for your students, according to the results of the “Pets” Fluency Assessment. Note that one chart has higher words per minute than the other.
3. Provide a box of *cold* and *hot* color pencils and erasers for each fluency group. Many teachers use blue pencils to record *cold* fluency timings and red pencils for *hot* fluency timings. Or regular pencils for *cold timings* and pens for *hot timings* work equally well.
4. Select the digital or non-digital instructional option for independent reading fluency practice.

Digital Option: Provide tablets or computers and earbuds with access to restricted-use YouTube videos, featuring modeled readings of the Animal Fluency Articles: (Level A at 95-115 words per minute; Level B at 115-135 words per minute; and Level C at 135-155 words per minute)

Non-Digital Option: Print the Animal Fluency Article for each student. Teachers may choose to laminate the articles for future instruction.



Reading Fluency Timing Chart

1. Display the “Pets” Fluency Assessment and explain how to count the words for their two-minute fluency timing.
2. Display the following Reading Fluency Timing Chart. Tell students that a *cold timing* is an unpracticed reading. Model how to shade in the *cold timing* with a blue or regular pencil.
3. Tell students that a *hot timing* is a practiced reading. The *hot timing* is recorded above the *cold timing* because the practiced reading timing is usually higher than the unpracticed reading timing. Model how to shade in the *hot timing* with a red pencil or pen. Tell students that if they read fewer words on the *hot timing* than they did on the *cold timing*, they simply draw a dark line to show their *hot timing*.

Tell students to be neat, but to take no more than 30 seconds to shade in their timings.

Beginning Independent Reading Fluency Practice

1. Assign the A, B, or C reading levels to each student, reminding them that their levels may change as they practice. If using the digital option, show students how to access the YouTube modeled readings.
2. Appoint a reading fluency leader for each group to distribute instructional materials and resources. Direct students to move to the computers or reading fluency groups.
3. Display the print copy of the first Animal Fluency Article, and pre-teach the challenge words in the upper right corner.
4. Instruct students to open their folders and take out their Reading Fluency Charts and the first Animal Fluency Article or navigate to the first Animal Fluency Article on YouTube.

Cold Timing

Say, “We are now going to read an article about an animal. Read out loud in six-inch voices, with good expression, at your own pace. Make sure to pause at commas and stop at periods. Most importantly, read for understanding. During the timing, don’t stop reading because we want our timings to be accurate. Ready, read.” [Start the timer.]

When the timer goes off, say, “Point your finger to the last word you read. Now shade in your *cold timing* on your Reading Fluency Timing Chart.” Display the chart to remind students how to record their *cold timings*.



Modeled Reading and Repeated Readings for the Digital Option

Say, “Now put in your earbuds and adjust the volume. Read out loud in six-inch voices, along with the modeled reading, until the end of the article. When finished, repeat the reading over and over on your own until I say, ‘Stop.’ Don’t read along with others; read quickly at your own pace.”

Modeled Reading and Repeated Readings for the Non-Digital Option

Say, “Your fluency leader will lead a choral read of the entire article. Everyone reads together in six-inch voices until the end of the article. When finished, repeat the reading over and over on your own until I say, ‘Stop.’ Don’t read along with others; read quickly at your own pace.”

Hot Timing

A few minutes prior to ending the independent reading fluency practice, say, “We are now going to re-read the article once more for our *hot timing*. Read out loud in six-inch voices, with good expression, at your own pace. Make sure to pause at commas and stop at periods. Most importantly, read for understanding. During the timing, don’t stop reading because we want our timings to be accurate. Ready, read.” [Start the timer.]

When the timer goes off, say, “Point your finger to the last word you read. Now shade in your *hot timing* on your Reading Fluency Timing Chart.” Display the chart to remind students how to record their *cold timings*.

Direct fluency leaders to collect the pencils and pens, fluency folders, tablets, and earbuds.

Note that students will often inflate their *hot timing* scores. Listen in to students who do so and counsel them to improve their expression and attention to punctuation. The *cold timings* over time provide the best formative assessments. The timings are certainly motivational, but the reading with modeled readings and repeated readings practice are the keys to improving fluency.



“The Ape” Reading Fluency #1

8 16 25 32 41 50 52 59 73 83 96 111 121 133 148 164 179 189 200 213 230 242 255 264 282 298 316 333 346 362 381 399 413 422	<p>The ape is a very interesting animal. One type of ape is the orangutan. Male orangutans can weigh as much as two normal size humans. Females weigh about half as much. Orangutans have long, strong arms and their hands and feet are shaped like hooks. They are shaggy and have red hair.</p> <p>Orangutans used to live all over Southeast Asia. Now they only live in a few rain forests on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Orangutans swing from tall trees to move around. It is warm where these animals live, but not too warm. There is a lot of rain there, so trees and plants grow very tall and big.</p> <p>Orangutans are <i>omnivores</i>, since they eat some birds and small mammals. However, they mostly eat plants, like fruit and leaves, instead of meat. Their diet consists of mostly fruit. The fruits they tend to prefer have a lot of sugar in them. Figs are the favorite fruit of the orangutans. Figs come from trees, and they are easy for orangutans to pick and eat. Orangutans also eat lots of young leaves from many trees in their habitat.</p> <p>Unlike many other animals, orangutans are single adults, so they have no family structure. Mother orangutans raise their children one at a time. The baby rides on its mother’s back for three years at the start of its life. There, it learns how to pick food and protect itself from danger. Female orangutans usually have one baby every six years. Older male orangutans may fight each other for the attention of the available female orangutans.</p> <p>The territory of an adult orangutan is not clearly established, as is the case with many animals. Often, orangutan territories will overlap. However, this does not mean that orangutans are social animals. They limit their social interaction to feeding, mating, and calling each other. Only rarely will orangutans get in fights with each other over food or territory. In these fights, the apes will demonstrate their strength by destroying branches, charging at each other, and biting each other until one gives up.</p> <p>Due to deforestation of the rain forest (cutting down trees for grazing or farmland), orangutans are becoming more and more endangered with each day. Palm oil farmers have cut down much of the forest on Sumatra and Borneo. Some people even capture orangutans to use them as pets in their homes. Orangutans are already on international endangered species lists, and their habitat has been increasingly threatened by humans, mainly through the deforestation of the rain forest.</p>	<p>orangutan Sumatra Borneo omnivore endangered species</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Eagle” Reading Fluency #2

<p>9 19 29 38 46 48 56 67 80 91 96 109 123 139 156 169 176 189 204 218 232 246 251 270 289 311 329 351 355 374 393 412 429 448</p>	<p>The eagle is a huge bird. One type of eagle is the bald eagle. This bird of prey has a large yellow beak shaped like a hook and a pure white head. Its body is brown with a white tail. Female bald eagles are much bigger than males.</p> <p>Bald eagles live all over North and South America. They make their nests near rivers, ponds, and lakes. There they can find many fish. Bald eagles build the biggest nests of any bird in America. Mostly, the birds stay away from people. Some birds move their nests frequently.</p> <p>Bald eagles eat whatever they can find. But, mostly they eat fish. Some of their favorite meals are trout and salmon. To catch fish, bald eagles swoop down over the water and grab the fish with their feet, called talons. If the fish is too heavy for the eagle to carry, it might have to swim in the water. Many eagles aren't able to swim very well. Sometimes, bald eagles will steal their food from other birds that are smaller.</p> <p>At about five years old, bald eagles find mates. They pick partners as their mates for life. Sometimes, if the pair cannot have a baby, they will find new partners. Babies are hatched from eggs in their nests, which are made from twigs and branches. Nests are usually in trees near open water. Mother and father eagles will take turns watching the eggs while the mate finds food or adds on to the nest.</p> <p>The bald eagle is also an important symbol of the United States of America. It is known as the national bird of the United States. In 1782, the Continental Congress named the bald eagle as the national bird. Ben Franklin once wrote that he thought that it was a bad choice. He said the bald eagle was too cowardly to symbolize the nation. Instead, he suggested the turkey. Today, the bald eagle appears on official seals of the United States on the backs of several coins. It was on the back of the quarter until 1999, with its head turned towards an olive branch.</p> <p>The bald eagle used to be a common sight in the United States. But, over the nation's history, this eagle's population has slowly decreased. This decrease is due to hunting and the use of pest spray by farmers. Many farmers used to spray DDT to reduce pests on their crops. This spray, when breathed by eagles, made them unable to have babies. Fortunately, the bald eagle population has begun to increase since DDT was banned as a pest spray. The bald eagle was officially removed from the list of endangered species in 1995.</p>	<p>prey salmon Continental official</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Ibex” Reading Fluency #3

<p>9 18 28 38 47 56 63 70 78 88 102 114 120 134 148 162 175 188 201 205 219 232 247 260 269 284 302 316 333 352 368 385 396</p>	<p>An ibex is a wild goat. Ibexes have big, long horns that turn behind their heads. The horns have spiky bumps on them. Their fur is very short, and not shaggy like a dog’s fur. As the weather warms, the fur gets darker. Ibexes are about five feet long and three feet high. They weigh about as much as two people put together.</p> <p>Ibexes live in the mountains. They are found in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Their homes are made in the rocks. Ibexes have very hard feet, so they can walk on rocks all day long. Some even live in snowy mountains, where it’s very cold. Mostly, they like to stay in the shade of trees in the daytime.</p> <p>Ibexes are <i>herbivores</i>, so they eat only plants. In the daytime, when it is warm, they search for food. They usually eat leaves from trees that grow in their natural habitat. Many ibexes also search for fruit to eat. However, fruit is less common in some of their grazing areas. Although ibexes are plant eaters, this does not mean that they are less dangerous to humans. Ibexes dislike being near humans and will sometimes attack. The main animal that hunts for ibexes is the leopard.</p> <p>Ibexes live in two different groups. Groups are made up of about ten to twenty ibexes. Males make up one group, and females and babies make up the other. Males fight each other to establish power in their groups and to win females as their mates. The most powerful male ibexes avoid each other and do not fight. This helps them avoid serious injury.</p> <p>Ibexes are known for their charging abilities when they attack predators. Ibexes put down their heads and butt into their predators. Although younger ibexes often fight, they avoid hurting each other. In fact, much of their fighting involves circling and pretend charges, which are called <i>mock</i> charges.</p> <p>Ibexes used to be the subjects of many game hunts. The handsome male heads were prized by hunters, and many of these heads were stuffed by <i>taxidermists</i> and then displayed in the homes of big game hunters. They were also hunted because of the medicinal properties of various parts of their bodies. However, the advancement of modern medicine has stopped most of the hunting of ibexes for their medicinal value. About ten thousand ibexes still live today in the world.</p>	<p>Europe herbivores predators taxidermists medicinal</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Okapi” Reading Fluency #4

<p>9 The okapi looks like a mix of zebra and 16 giraffe. These animals have dark backs. On 24 their legs, they have white stripes. These stripes 32 make them look like zebras. Their bodies look 41 like small giraffes. But, they do not have very 50 long necks. Their ears are big and pointy, and 58 their tongues are long, too. Okapis have short 64 horns that are covered by skin.</p> <p>75 These animals like to live in large areas away from towns. 88 They can be found only in the middle of Africa in the Democratic 99 Republic of the Congo. Most okapi live in the mountains and forests. 109 They leave scents to mark their territories. Males protect their land, 122 but they allow females to walk through it to find food.</p> <p>134 Okapi are strange eaters. They are <i>herbivores</i>, so they eat tree leaves, 148 grass, and fungi. But, they also have been known to eat charcoal from burnt 161 trees! Also, they commonly eat red clay from the ground near streams or 174 rivers. Along with plants, charcoal, and clay, they eat fruit and berries. Okapi 188 spend most of their day eating and searching for food. When they find food, 203 they chew it, spit it out, and chew it again. This helps their weak digestive 204 system.</p> <p>219 Female okapi give birth to a single baby, called a calf. Babies are fed by 232 their mothers and they grow quickly. Only thirty minutes after they are born, 245 okapi can stand up and walk around. Mothers leave their babies during the day. 260 They return at night to feed them. In zoos, okapi live for about thirty years. 272 But, no one knows how long they live in the wild.</p> <p>287 Although they generally live alone, Okapi have ways of communicating with each other. They make 306 different sounds that zoologists are able to identify. One sound, called a <i>chuff</i>, is made when one okapi meets 324 another. The <i>bleat</i> is used when an okapi calf is separated from its mother and put into danger.</p> <p>341 The forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are threatened by people eager for their rich 358 natural resources. As a result, okapi are losing their territory. Okapi are not only threatened by loggers, miners, 376 and farmers, but they are also threatened by illegal hunters, called <i>poachers</i>, who hunt them for their valuable 389 skins. The okapi population is currently classified as “near threatened” by extinction.</p>	<p>Democratic digestive communicating zoologists extinction</p>		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Mule” Reading Fluency #5

7 15 24 33 43 50 60 69 81 91 104 115 127 128 141 154 167 182 193 204 216 230 247 257 273 289 306 325 328 345 363 371	<p>Mules are babies, born from donkey and horse parents. They have short, thick heads. They have long pointy ears. Mules have a short mane, like most horses. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some mules can grow to weigh as much as six humans! Mules have small, strong hooves.</p> <p>Most of the mules in the world are in China. In that country, mules are used for riding. Mules are also used for pulling carts. Many other mules are found in Mexico, South America, and North Africa. Mules live mostly on farms with people. There are only a few wild mules and many of these animals live in California. They were lost during the California Gold Rush of the 1850s and have survived in foothill canyons ever since.</p> <p>The mule’s owner can purchase food for mules at any farm store. Mules have the same diets as horses and donkeys. However, they need less protein than horses. Their favorite snacks are hay or other dried grasses. Mules need lots of fresh, clean water. But, if they drink too much, they can have serious problems. Mule owners need to control their food and drink levels.</p> <p>Since mules come from two different parent animals, they are called hybrids. Most mules are sterile. This means that they cannot produce any babies. But, some mules have been able to have babies. Mule babies are called <i>foals</i>. If a female mule and a male horse are the parents, then the foal is mostly horse-like. A male donkey produces a mostly donkey-like foal.</p> <p>Mules are intelligent animals. They can endure hardship and severe conditions, which is why they are commonly used for transportation and farm work. Mules are stubborn if treated harshly. Horses will forgive their owners for treating them poorly, but mules generally will not. Mules are very proud animals. When treated well by their owners, mules are usually very friendly. They will bond and work well with people who treat them nicely.</p> <p>The number of mules in the world is increasing. Endangered animal agencies have rated the mule of “no concern” for extinction. In China, where there is the densest population, mules are still bred daily. The mule population is even increasing in industrialized nations.</p>	<p>hybrids</p> <p>sterile</p> <p>intelligent</p> <p>transportation</p> <p>industrialized</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Rooster” Reading Fluency #6

6 14 22 31 38 46 55 60 72 86 98 107 118 128 130 144 156 170 182 192 207 223 236 241 253 272 289 308 326 342 356 373 386	<p>Roosters are male chickens. There are many types of roosters. They come in a variety of colors: brown, white, black, and red. Roosters have red combs on the top of their heads. They have yellow beaks. They have black feathers on their tails. Below their eyes, roosters have a white spot. Their thin legs and feet are gray or black.</p> <p>Most roosters live on farms. In fact, chickens live in all areas of the world. But, most of them live in China and the United States. Most chicken owners keep their chickens in <i>coops</i>. A coop is a walled or screened shack designed for chickens. Coops keep roosters warm during the winter and cool in the summertime. Female chickens, called <i>hens</i>, even have built-in nesting spots in many coops.</p> <p>Most roosters are fed by their owners. Their diet is made up of insects, worms, slugs, and snails. However, they also eat plants, fruit, seeds, acorns, and other foods. Roosters can find their own food if the owner wishes. But, they must have a lot of room to search for their food.</p> <p>Farmers chiefly keep chickens for their eggs; however, some chicken farmers raise hens and roosters for their meat. The job of the rooster is to protect the nest and the hens. Usually, there is one rooster who is in charge of a group of other roosters and hens. The head rooster wins this position through fighting or pretend-fighting.</p> <p>Throughout history, roosters have been used in “cock fights.” People organize fights between roosters and bet on the winner. Roosters that are used in cock fights are specially bred and trained for strength. Although cock fighting is a traditional sporting event in nearly every part of the world, most Americans considered it to be animal cruelty. In fact, cock fighting is illegal in forty-nine states in the United States. Some community and state laws allow sentencing for up to three years in prison for those convicted of this crime. World-wide, thousands of birds are killed or hurt every year in cock fights.</p> <p>Roosters are domesticated animals. They have no threat of extinction. The number of chickens worldwide continues to increase. In fact, chickens are the world’s largest group of domesticated birds. With a population of over eight billion, there are more chickens than humans on earth!</p>	<p>traditional</p> <p>sentencing</p> <p>convicted</p> <p>domesticated</p>	
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“The Woodpecker” Reading Fluency #7

6 13 23 33 42 48 56 62 70 78 91 102 114 123 128 139 150 159 174 186 194 203 219 232 246 262 275 291 308 321 336 352 365	<p>Woodpeckers are some of the loudest birds around. Not all woodpeckers look the same. Most have two toes on the front of their feet and two on the back. Their tongues are long enough to curl all the way around their heads. Woodpeckers have strong pointed beaks. Their bottom tail feathers are strong and stiff. Most woodpeckers weigh only about one pound.</p> <p>These birds can be found all over the world. They live in wooded areas everywhere but in Australia. Their homes are often made in the tops of trees in forests. Most woodpeckers will make holes in trees with their beaks to build their nests. Some will find holes and use them. Different types of woodpeckers like different trees. But, many woodpeckers prefer cypress trees and redwoods.</p> <p>A woodpecker’s daily diet consists of different foods depending on the type of woodpecker. Common foods include insects, fruits, and nuts. Like many birds, woodpeckers enjoy eating worms. Woodpeckers are mainly omnivores. They use their beaks to hit bark on trees to expose bugs (ants and beetles, usually) which they then eat. Some woodpeckers have been found to eat sap from trees. Others eat mostly acorns.</p> <p>Female woodpeckers produce about four babies each season. Males and females work together to dig holes out of trees to provide a nest for their babies. Babies remain in their eggs for about two weeks until they hatch. When they hatch, they are blind and do not have any feathers. One parent goes out and finds food to bring back to the nest, while the other stays behind to protect the eggs. Babies usually leave the nest after about thirty days.</p> <p>Woodpeckers are known for their repetitive tapping on tree trunks to expose insects from tree bark. Some species tap on trees to communicate or attract other woodpeckers. Woodpeckers can tap more than ten thousand times a day! They are usually not very protective of their territory.</p> <p>The population of woodpeckers is generally not considered to be threatened, but their habitat in some areas has been reduced due to woodcutting and deforestation. Two species of these birds are considered officially endangered by the government. Still, the overall woodpecker population is balanced.</p>	<p>Australia beetles repetitive threatened considered</p>	
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“The Cow” Reading Fluency #8

7 15 23 32 41 49 54 62 75 87 100 108 122 136 150 163 177 192 197 210 223 237 248 267 288 307 328 332 348 367 386 394	<p>Cows have many uses. Farmers raise cows for different reasons. Some raise cows for their meat. Others raise cows for their dairy products. Cows come in many colors. Cows can be brown, white, or black. Male cows are called <i>bulls</i>, and they have horns. Female cows are gentle. Bulls can be mean and dangerous.</p> <p>Almost every place in the world has cows. Cows live in grassy meadows or on farms. There are some wild cows left in the world. These wild cows are in Midwestern America, India, and Africa. Wild cows are not the same as farm cows. Still, most cows live on farms, not in the wild.</p> <p>Cows on farms are fed based on their use. Beef cows are fed differently from dairy cows. A beef cow is fed corn, grain, and grasses. Farmers feed these cows a large amount of protein. Dairy cows need large amounts of fiber. Dairy cows provide milk and cream. Cows have very large stomachs that are divided into four parts. Each part has a different job in digesting food. Usually, only older cows are used to make clothes. Their hides (the outer layers of cow skins) are dried into leather.</p> <p>Baby cows are called <i>calves</i>. Some calves die at birth, because they are so large. Older cows have less problems giving birth than do young cows. Calves are nursed by their mothers for about ninety days. Adult cows like to stay in groups with each other. Bulls usually stay by themselves.</p> <p>Cows require a lot of care from farmers. Cow hooves have to be trimmed by farmers once or twice each year. The hair at the end of a cow’s tail (called the switch) must be frequently cleaned and trimmed. In the winter, cows are kept inside at night to protect them from the cold in most climates. Additionally, cows require a lot of fresh hay on which to sleep. They spend 40-50% of their day lying down. Cows take several naps throughout the day.</p> <p>In India, most people follow the religion of Hinduism. Hindus believe that cows are sacred animals. Hindus do not eat them and cows are free to roam about the countryside. Worldwide, cows are certainly not endangered animals. There are over 1.3 billion cows still in the world today. That number is almost equal to one cow for every six people on earth.</p>	<p>calves</p> <p>climates</p> <p>Hinduism</p> <p>sacred</p>	
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“The Koi” Reading Fluency #9

8 17 24 33 39 46 53 65 76 88 100 112 116 128 142 153 167 181 194 206 221 236 252 260 277 297 316 331 343 358 376 393 410 422	<p>Koi fish are freshwater fishes and are kept by many as pets. Koi come in many different colors. Most of them are orange. Koi have eyes on both sides of their heads. Behind their eyes, they have gills. These gills help them breathe under water. On their backs, they have a fin.</p> <p>The koi fish are related to carps. Carps come from the Caspian Sea in Europe. Colored koi fish were first discovered in Japan. Today, they live everywhere in the world. They are mostly kept as pets, but some have been released into the wild. People like keeping koi because of their bright colors. Many people have built koi ponds to enjoy these fish.</p> <p>Koi will eat many different foods if they are available. Koi owners usually feed them fish food from the store. However, they may feed their fish with some live foods. These foods include worms, prawns, tadpoles, and frogs. Some live foods, like insects, are dangerous for koi to eat. Owners can also feed their koi fish brown bread and lettuce. But, owners need to be careful as not to harm their fishes with foods that they can't digest.</p> <p>Sometimes, male koi will bully females. If this happens, an owner must separate the two. After the babies, called <i>fry</i>, are born, they will find a place to hide. After two or three days of growing, the newborn koi fish will start swimming up to the surface of the water. The fry need to be fed and treated differently by their owner to help their growth.</p> <p>Koi require a constant, good filtration system for the water in which they swim and live. Adding simple tap water to their habitat could even kill the fish. Tap water is filled with chlorine and other chemicals that may have negative effects on koi fish. Koi habitats must have water that has the right texture (hardness or softness), temperature, sunshine, and chemicals. It is recommended that new koi owners read information about creating a home for their fishes before bringing their fish home.</p> <p>Since koi are domesticated water animals, they are not threatened by extinction. The population of koi in the world is increasing steadily as the demand for these beautiful colored fishes grows. Humans have destroyed some koi that have been released into the wild, because they pollute the water around them, making it undrinkable for livestock. However, large amounts of money have been spent to try to destroy these wild populations of koi, and those operations have been largely unsuccessful.</p>	<p>discovered</p> <p>separate</p> <p>filtration</p> <p>steadily</p>	
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“The Hawk” Reading Fluency #10

8	The hawk is a large, powerful bird. One		
17	type of hawk is the red-tailed hawk. These birds	talons	
26	are mostly brown in color. Their feathers have two	falconry	
33	different colors: light and dark brown. Red-tailed	squirrels	
42	hawks are known for their bright red tails. They		
50	are slightly larger than common house cats. Their		
58	claws are called <i>talons</i> . They are very sharp.		
70	Red-tailed hawks fly all over the world. Most of them live		
82	in North and South America. These hawks like to live in many		
94	different places. Some live in forests and some in fields. They live		
106	in deserts and cities, too. Red-tailed hawks are often seen on		
107	telephone poles. Where there are trees, there are also red-tailed		
115	hawks.		
128	These hawks are birds of prey. That means that they usually hunt for food		
143	while flying. They do not have three meals a day. They mostly feed on small		
157	animals. They like rabbits, snakes, and rats. But, they also eat fish and other		
173	birds. When hunting, they fly high in the air and look down. As soon as they		
186	see food, they swoop down quickly and grab it with their talons.		
198	Red-tailed hawks can have babies when they are two years old. They		
212	have partners that they stay with for many years. When a partner dies, the		
227	hawk will seek a new one. Hawks remain in the same nest for many years.		
240	Each spring, female red-tailed hawks lay one to three eggs. They protect these		
246	eggs from owls and other birds.		
263	Humans have often used red-tailed hawks in falconry—the sport of using birds to hunt game. Hunters		
282	have trained these hawks to track down game such as squirrels, rabbits, and ducks. And, they have even been		
303	trained to work with dogs in hunting. When a hawk catches its prey, the trainer will then locate the bird and		
324	trade its catch for a piece of ready-to-eat meat. There are very few falconers today. It can be a very dangerous		
325	sport.		
341	In the United States alone, there are about one million red-tailed hawks. Animal rights activists state		
359	that the number of hawks has decreased due to deforestation—the cutting down of forests. However, as more		
376	national parks have opened, the hawk population has risen greatly. Red-tailed hawks are not main targets of		
389	bird-hunters, even though the hawks have been known to hunt small farm animals.		
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“The Ermine” Reading Fluency #11

7 16 24 33 41 49 53 60 74 87 100 110 121 136 149 164 173 185 199 214 228 241 256 268 278 296 316 336 355 361 381 400 413	<p>The ermine is also called the short-tailed weasel. Ermines weigh less than one pound. In the summer, their coats are brown. Their stomachs are white. But, when it turns cold, their coats turn white. Ermines have long necks and bodies, but short legs. Their heads are shaped like triangles with two pink ears.</p> <p>Ermines live in Canada, Alaska, Europe, and Asia. They like to live in cold places. Ermines find rocks to live by. They make lots of homes in between the rocks. In fall, ermines shed their brown coats. Their white coats let them match the snow in the winter. If they cannot be seen, they cannot be eaten!</p> <p>Ermines are carnivores. Mostly, they eat rabbits. With their sharp teeth, they are able to catch prey much bigger than themselves. But, they also like to eat rodents and small insects. During wintertime, ermines will use their sharp claws to dig under snow. Under the snow, they can often find food to eat. They also use their claws for burying their food.</p> <p>Male ermines become adults at one year of age. Females become adults much faster, at only two months of age. Females have ten to thirteen babies every year. Baby ermines weigh only about as much as a coin! At eight weeks of age, the mother teaches them how to hunt. After that, females leave their mothers. Males stay with their mothers until the next spring. Males never help raise any of the babies. Ermines live for about four to seven years. They live, eat, and hunt on their own. However, they sometimes communicate with each other through scents. Ermines have an excellent sense of smell.</p> <p>In colonial history, ermines were once used as furs for coats. The Kings and Queens of England often wore ermine on their robes. The ermine was known as a symbol of purity in Europe, because of its bright white color. Ermine fur was only harvested in the winter, when the ermine was totally white and had shed its brown coat from summer. Even today, in some areas of Japan, the ermine is considered a symbol of good luck, because of its friendly appearance.</p> <p>Today, ermine fur is still popular. In some countries, an ermine coat is just as prized as is a mink coat. Ermines are not close to extinction. The Endangered Species List rates them as “not a concern.” In fact, they spread quite quickly and ermines are even overpopulated in parts of Europe.</p>	<p>ermine stomachs carnivores purity mink</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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“The Armadillo” Reading Fluency #12

6 14 21 28 35 42 52 62 74 88 98 104 115 129 144 159 175 186 198 210 223 236 252 262 269 288 306 328 341 355 370 387 405 417	<p>Armadillos are made to dig. They have short, strong legs. These legs are good for finding food. Most armadillos have bony plates on their tails. Armadillos also have shells on their backs. They are mostly brown, and they have short pointy ears.</p> <p>Armadillos are about the same length as a common house cat. Armadillos live all over America. They mostly live near rivers or lakes. They like to dig holes for their homes. Armadillos often stay in the shade under trees. But, they also like to stay under the homes of people. Some armadillos will make their home underneath your house or in your backyard.</p> <p>Armadillos are <i>omnivores</i>, since they do eat some dead birds. However, they mostly eat plants and bugs, instead of meat. Their diet consists mainly of ants, beetles, and worms. They do not have very sharp teeth, so most of what they eat must be very easy to chew. Armadillos do have sharp claws, and they dig for bugs. Also, they use these claws to tear apart rotten wood to search for ants. Armadillos can eat up to 40,000 ants in one meal!</p> <p>Female armadillos give birth to their babies in nests. These nests are usually dug into the ground for protection. Once per year, female armadillos get pregnant and lay just one egg. From this egg hatches four baby armadillos. All the babies look the same. These armadillos will usually live to be ten to fifteen years old. Most of the time, armadillos like to live by themselves. Sometimes they will meet to find food. Armadillos call out to each other with grunting noises.</p> <p>Armadillos like to swim, and they are quite talented at it. They usually use their arms and legs to dog paddle through lakes or streams. Armadillos can also go underwater, if they want. They can hold their breath for four to six minutes at a time. And, because their heavy shell makes it hard for them to float, they breathe air into their bodies to stay afloat, just like inflating a raft.</p> <p>Unfortunately, most species of armadillos are endangered. Only one species seems to be increasing in number—the <i>nine-banded armadillo</i>. Many armadillos are dying off because of people. As people populate more and more land, armadillos are losing their natural habitats. Also, the pets that people bring with them to live in the armadillo habitats present problems. Sometimes dogs have been known to kill these interesting creatures. Still, there are many nine-banded armadillos left in the world.</p>	<p>armadillos pregnant unfortunately populate</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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“The Orca” Reading Fluency #13

8	The orca is also called the <i>killer whale</i> .	octopuses throughout commercial trainability
17	An orca is a black and white dolphin. Orcas	
25	have white chests and sides. They also have	
34	white spots above their eyes. The rest of the	
45	body is black. Each orca has a large fin on its	
53	back. Orcas are very large. One killer whale	
67	can be as long as two cars! Their great size make them very strong.	
79	Killer whales can be found all over the world. In fact, killer	
92	whales live in all five oceans. They also live in some seas. Orcas like	
104	cold water more than warm water. They have even been known to	
116	swim under ice! Each season, orcas swim to different places. But,	
127	every year, they come back to the same places during summer.	
140	Orcas are known as the “wolves of the sea.” They are called <i>wolves</i> ,	
155	because they hunt in packs. A killer whale’s diet is mainly made up of large	
169	salmon. But, orcas have been known to eat other water animals too. Some of	
181	their prey includes tuna, sharks, octopuses, and reptiles. Rarely, orcas will eat	
194	mammals. They have also been known to eat seals, sea lions, and other whales.	
207	Some have even been seen eating blue whales, which are the largest animals	
220	on earth. Orcas eat up to 500 pounds of food each day!	
232	At fifteen years of age, female orcas become adults. Mothers have a	
246	single baby, called a <i>calf</i> once every five years. Nearly half of all newborn	
260	calves die before turning one year old. Orcas live in large groups called <i>pods</i> .	
273	These groups each have their own language, which is different than that of	
285	other pods. Orca speech sounds like loud screaming. Killer whales hunt with	
299	their groups and share food with each other. Pods of orcas have been known to	
306	travel with each other during hunting.	
320	Throughout history, commercial whaling—the business of killing whales for food, blubber, and oil—has	
335	been common. This whaling has reduced the orca population significantly. Additionally, orcas have been shot	
352	or even bombed by some governments, because orcas are such good hunters that they compete with	
362	commercial fishermen and reduce the supply of fish to catch.	
377	The intelligence, trainability, and beauty of orcas have made them popular attractions at many zoos	
393	and wildlife exhibits. Orcas are not listed as endangered or threatened, although, numbers have declined in	
407	some parts of the world. The orca population especially thrives in the Antarctic ocean.	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes
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“The Anteater” Reading Fluency #14

6 13 23 31 38 45 52 65 75 86 99 113 127 130 143 155 169 185 197 212 223 234 248 263 275 288 295 313 331 344 364 381 388	<p>The anteater is a strange looking animal. A giant anteater’s body is very long. It is about as long as a person’s body. Giant anteaters have long, rough hair and a dark, bushy tail. Some giant anteaters are brown, while others are gray. All giant anteaters have a black stripe. They also have a very long tongue, which they use to catch bugs to eat.</p> <p>Giant anteaters live in grasslands and rain forests. They are mostly from South America. They also live in North America, too. They find their food in wet forest areas. They spend the whole day searching for food. They make their home in a hole at the bottom of a tree or in a hollow log. Giant anteaters can live near people or away from them.</p> <p>Searching on the ground or in logs, giant anteaters find and eat a variety of insects. Their favorite foods are ants and termites. Giant anteaters can eat thousands of insects in just a few minutes! These anteaters can smell their food from far away. Since they do not have any teeth, they use rocks in their mouths to break down their food. Giant anteaters have sticky tongues that allow them to pick up many insects at once. They do not destroy the insects’ habitat so that they can come back again another time.</p> <p>In the autumn season, giant anteaters find mates. After about six months, baby anteaters are born. Giant anteaters only have one baby at a time. For the first year of their lives, baby giant anteaters will ride on their mothers’ backs. Then, after a few months, baby anteaters will start leaving their mothers for short trips. Eventually, after about two years, they will leave their mothers and live on their own.</p> <p>Some anteaters are active in the day while sleeping at night, but others are just the opposite. They are light sleepers and they will wake up at the slightest sound around them. They protect themselves from predators with their powerful claws. One of their worst predators is the jaguar.</p> <p>Humans are by far the biggest threat to the wild giant anteater population. As humans continue to expand their habitat by destroying forests and constructing buildings, the giant anteater population decreases. They are considered vulnerable to extinction.</p>	<p>variety</p> <p>autumn</p> <p>eventually</p> <p>vulnerable</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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“The Elephant” Reading Fluency #15

6	Elephants are the biggest land animals.		
14	They have huge trunks. They use these to	researchers	
22	eat and drink. Under an elephant’s trunk are	compassion	
29	tusks. Tusks look like big, white bananas.	Hannibal	
36	They help elephants dig and fight. An	illegally	
43	elephant’s skin is mostly gray or brown.		
54	They have large floppy ears on the sides of their heads.		
64	Elephants live in Africa and Asia. African elephants have large		
74	ears, while Indian elephants have smaller ears. Elephants live in		
87	places with a lot of grasses, trees, and shrubs. They also live by		
98	ponds and lakes. Sometimes they walk for miles to find food and		
108	water. Many elephants live in zoos throughout the world.		
118	Elephants are herbivores. They spend about sixteen hours every day		
132	finding food! Most of their diet is made up of grasses. Other foods include		
144	leaves, bamboo, twigs, and fruit. They even eat flowers. Elephants use their		
160	trunks to pull food from trees or from the ground. They can eat up to 300		
176	pounds of food in just one day! They usually drink water once or twice a day,		
188	but some elephants will even go three days before taking a drink.		
200	Elephant family groups are made up of females and their babies. The		
214	babies are called <i>calves</i> . The family groups are called <i>herds</i> and can be as		
227	small as three or four or as large as twenty-five. Females without babies		
238	usually follow mother elephants and help them. This prepares the females to be		
252	good mothers. Young males leave the herd between ages ten and thirteen.		
263	Older females in the herd protect young calves from other animals.		
281	Elephants are some of the most intelligent land animals. In fact, they have the largest brains of any		
297	living animal in the world, even whales. According to researchers, elephants are able to express human-like		
314	feelings, such as compassion and grief. Elephants are very similar to humans. They are the only animals		
334	known to have a ceremony when a fellow elephant dies. When an elephant is hurt, others will band together to		
352	help it. Elephants also have excellent memories and they have even been known to use plants to heal		
353	themselves.		
368	Since the beginning of time, elephants have been threatened by humans. Alexander the Great and		
386	Hannibal used them in war to defeat their enemies. In recent years, elephants have been illegally hunted for		
404	their ivory tusks. The elephant population is officially endangered. There are only about half of a million left		
408	in the world today.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
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“The Iguana” Reading Fluency #16

7 15 21 29 36 44 56 61 71 83 98 110 114 125 139 152 166 176 188 203 219 232 247 261 272 290 309 324 341 344 360 376 394 406	<p>Iguanas are types of lizards. They are about five feet long with their tails. These animals are green or grayish-green. Their skin is rough. They have plenty of bumps on their backs. Green iguanas have long fingers and claws to help them climb. These animals look heavy, but they are not. They are quite fast. Their teeth are sharp and strong.</p> <p>These iguanas are mainly from South America. But, they also can be found in Mexico and Florida. They usually live near water, and they often climb in trees. They can fall from the top of a very tall tree and land without being hurt. Green iguanas use their claws to hook onto trees.</p> <p>Green iguanas are mainly <i>herbivores</i>. They feed on flowers, leaves, and fruits. The plum is one of the favorite foods of the green iguana. Although green iguanas mainly eat plants, they also have been seen eating mice, dead fish, and insects. Some wild green iguanas have even been known to eat bird eggs. Baby iguanas have a different diet than full-grown iguanas.</p> <p>Iguanas usually prefer to live alone. However, they can be found living in groups in sunny areas. Green iguanas lay about fifty eggs at a time. They lay all their eggs in a hole they dig in the ground called a <i>burrow</i>. Sometimes, they dig more burrows than they use to trick animals that may want to eat their eggs. After a female iguana lays her eggs, she never returns to the hole. The eggs hatch by themselves, and the babies will grow up without parents. Only about five iguanas survive each batch of eggs.</p> <p>Many people in the United States and Mexico want to have iguanas for pets, but iguanas are difficult to keep and care for. These animals are considered to be <i>exotic</i> pets, because they are unusual and require special treatment. Because of increasing demand, hunting for iguanas can be very profitable, though some states prohibit iguana hunting altogether. Now, more and more iguanas are being raised on iguana farms to sell as pets.</p> <p>In South America, some people have other uses for iguanas. These people, mostly living in remote rainforest locations, actually eat green iguanas. Those that eat these lizards refer to iguanas as “bamboo chickens” or “chickens of the trees.” However, iguanas are not part of the normal diet in most South American households. The overall green iguana population is healthy and in balance.</p>	<p>iguanas</p> <p>burrows</p> <p>exotic</p> <p>altogether</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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“The Otter” Reading Fluency #17

9	The otter lives on land and in fresh or saltwater. Otters have long, slim bodies.	<p>pregnancy</p> <p>scent</p> <p>rehabilitated</p> <p>destruction</p>	
16	Their arms and legs are very short. Most		
24	otters have sharp claws on their feet. Their		
32	tails are strong and long. They have two		
40	layers of fur. The top layer is hard and thick.		
50	Under that is a softer, thinner layer. This fur keeps otters warm, even		
63	in cold water. Otters have a lot of hair, making their fur very dense.		
77	There are thirteen different types of otters in the world. They		
88	live almost everywhere. Otters live by rivers, creeks, seas, and		
98	oceans. Some even live in swamps! Fresh water otters spend most of		
110	their time on land. They use small holes in trees or rocks for homes.		
124	But, sea otters do not go on land very much. Sea otters use plants to		
139	sleep on when they are in the water.		
147	Otters eat mostly fish. However, they also eat lobsters, clams, shrimp,		
158	and mice. Some otters have become experts at opening clams and shellfish.		
170	Rarely, otters will eat small land animals or birds. Otters are very active		
183	hunters. The normal otter will hunt for about three to four hours a day.		
197	Nursing mothers will hunt up to eight hours a day! Many otters will catch their		
212	food using their teeth, but some use their claws.		
221	Most otters start having babies at about five years of age. But, otters in		
235	Africa can start having babies at just one year old! Most otters are pregnant for		
250	about two months, except sea otters. For sea otters, pregnancy lasts about six		
263	months. Otters have babies each year. Otters ferociously defend their babies		
274	against any attacks. Female otters feed their babies for about six months		
289	before the babies begin to hunt for themselves.		
294	Otters use their mouths to produce sounds and communicate with each other. Giant otters are the		
303	loudest of all the species. Researchers have identified a wide variety of otter calls. Otters also communicate		
327	by scent. At the bottom of their tails, they have openings that send out their scent.		
343	Although there are still many otters, they are generally considered as vulnerable to extinction. Many		
358	zoo parks have rescued and rehabilitated otters, especially sea otters. Efforts to reintroduce otters into the wild		
375	in Alaska, Washington, and California have been very successful. Still, the otter population remains		
389	threatened by fish shortages, human destruction of habitat, and water pollution.		
400			
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“The Umbrella Bird” Reading Fluency #18

7 15 24 33 40 43 52 64 75 89 100 112 117 129 142 156 171 182 196 211 226 240 241 261 283 304 318 333 351 369 382	<p>The umbrella bird does not carry an umbrella. It does live in the rainforests. This bird gets its name from its head feathers. These feathers face forward and cover its face like an umbrella. Umbrella birds are about twelve to eighteen inches long.</p> <p>They also have a long piece of skin called a <i>wattle</i> that hangs down from their necks. Turkey have wattles like these. But, umbrella birds have even bigger ones. Some of these wattles are as long as the birds. It’s amazing that the birds do not lose their balance when standing on tree branches. The wattles help them chirp very loudly. In fact, umbrella birds are some of the noisiest birds in the rainforests.</p> <p>Most umbrella birds live in Central America and in the northern areas of South America. They stay in the mountains when they are having babies. They live in the tropical rainforest lowlands the rest of the time. They make their homes in the tallest trees. This is where most of the sunlight is found.</p> <p>Umbrella birds are <i>omnivores</i>, so they eat both meat and plants. Umbrella birds move up and down the trees of the rainforest looking for prey. Once they find an animal or large insect, they grab it with their beaks. Then, they knock it out by slamming it against a tree branch. Finally, they eat it. Umbrella birds will eat frogs, lizards, and small rodents. They also like to eat fruit.</p> <p>Males look for female mates in an interesting way. They sit up in a tree all day long. While they sit, they use their wattles to make a loud sound. It sounds like someone banging on a big metal trash can. The females can hear this sound throughout the forest. If they are looking for a mate, they can follow the sound to where the males are sitting. Then, the female picks which male it likes best.</p> <p>Umbrella birds are in danger of extinction because their habitat is rapidly diminishing. Forests are being quickly cleared out in Central America and in northern South America to plant crops or graze livestock. The actions that people take to expand farmland or get more grazing land affect other animals and their habitats. It would certainly be a shame to lose these interesting umbrella birds.</p>	<p>umbrella wattle noisiest diminishing</p>	
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“The Bear” Reading Fluency #19

7 13 21 29 38 46 52 64 78 90 103 116 127 139 152 165 178 191 201 213 227 239 253 267 274 291 307 325 339 357 372 389 399	<p>Bears are some of the most powerful wild animals. Different bears have different colors of fur. Brown bears can have brown, blonde, and black fur. Their tails are about as long as their heads. Bears are very strong. Some bears are big, and some are small. Male bears are bigger than females.</p> <p>There are few brown bears left in the world. They mainly live in Russia and in the United States. Brown bears used to live all over, but they were killed where humans settled. Brown bears like to live in the open country where there are mountains. Others like to live in forests. Bears build <i>dens</i> in which to sleep. Dens are large holes that bears dig under trees or sometimes on the sides of hills.</p> <p>Brown bears are omnivores. They eat a variety of different plants and meats. They mainly like to eat leaves, berries, roots, fungi, and sprouts. But they also eat fish, insects, and small mammals like raccoons. Brown bears in Yellowstone have been known to eat up to 40,000 moths in one day! Occasionally, these bears will eat deer or moose. They have been known to break into cars and homes to get food as well.</p> <p>Over the summer months, brown bears look for other brown bears for mates. They remain with the same mates from several days to a few weeks. Males compete with other males for their partners. Each year, females have about one to four babies, called <i>cubs</i>. Cubs are born blind, without teeth, and without hair. They remain with their mothers for two to four years and learn how to hunt, fish, and defend themselves.</p> <p>The California State Flag features a large type of brown bear called a <i>grizzly</i>. Although, since the early 1900s, grizzly bears have been extinct in California. Grizzly bears were wiped out by organized hunting, sponsored and paid for by the California state government, because these bears were such a threat to humans and livestock. The grizzly habitat did not mix well with the human habitat.</p> <p>While the brown bear is not a main concern on the endangered species list, some sub-species of the brown bear are threatened. Specifically, the grizzly bear is facing endangerment. Some organizations want to reintroduce the bears to their previous habitats in the Western United States. One of the largest grizzly reserves in the world is Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.</p>	<p>mammals organized occasionally reintroduced</p>	
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“The Camel” Reading Fluency #20

7	The camel is a special animal. Camels live in some of the driest places on earth.	Gobi military mid-nineteenth Bactrian	
16	Camels have very long necks and large		
23	nostrils. They are most famous for their		
30	humps on their backs. Most camels have		
37	just one hump, but some have two. They		
45	have long, skinny legs and very large feet.		
53	Camels live in the hottest places on earth. Those with one		
64	hump mostly live in the deserts of Africa, Arabia, and Australia.		
75	Another type of camel with two humps lives only in the Gobi Desert		
87	of Asia. Most camels are cared for by human owners. People ride		
99	their camels on the hot desert sand. They also use camels to carry		
112	things for them. Some people think that camels are mean and kick		
124	and spit. This is not true. Camels are very helpful and smart.		
137	Camels can last an entire week without eating food or drinking water!		
149	Camel owners will feed them grass, grains, wheat, and oats. The camels slowly		
161	digest their food. They spit it up and chew it again. Although many people		
175	think that camels store water in their humps, this is not true. The humps are		
189	made of fatty tissue and this does help camels last longer between meals.		
204	These animals generally live for about thirty to forty years. When		
215	females are about five years of age, they are ready to have babies. Females are		
229	pregnant for about thirteen months before having their babies. They usually		
240	have one baby, but can have twins.		
248	Throughout history, camels have been used in warfare because camels can walk lengthy distances		
262	without growing tired. The first recorded use of camels in battle was in 547 B.C. when Cyrus the Great of		
282	Persia rode camels into battle. But, camels were not only used in the military during the ancient times. In the		
302	mid-nineteenth century, the United States rode camels to patrol the California-Mexico border. And, recently		
316	United Nations peacekeeping troops in Africa have been using camels for transportation.		
328	Most of the world's camels currently are domesticated. However, there are about 900 Bactrian		
342	(Asian) camels left in the wild. They live in China and Mongolia where they are threatened by illegal mining,		
361	wolves, and hunting. Many efforts to help increase the population of wild Asian camels have been made, but		
379	they have met little success.		
384			
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“The Dog” Reading Fluency #21

8	Dogs are kept as pets everywhere in the world. They are known as “man’s best friends.”	poisonous championships agility obstacle neutered	
16	Dogs have different sizes, shapes, and colors. Big		
24	dogs can be as big as wolves. Small dogs can be		
35	as small as house cats. Most dogs have a tail.		
45	Some tails are long and straight, while others are		
54	curly, short, or twisted.		
58	Different kinds of dogs have different		
64	abilities. Humans have used dogs to help rescue		
72	people. Dogs also help the police. Dogs even help to guide the blind.		
85	They can hunt, herd, and guard. Dogs have very good hearing. They		
97	can hear four times as far as people. They can also smell better than		
111	most animals, too. Dogs are very useful and helpful to people.		
122	Unlike most carnivores, dogs don’t just eat meat. Besides meat, they eat		
134	vegetables, grains, eggs, and even milk. Some human food, however, is very		
146	dangerous to dogs. Chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins, and some nuts can hurt		
158	dogs. Some plants and flowers also can be dangerous to dogs. Dog owners		
171	must be very careful not to feed their dogs anything that may be poisonous to		
186	their digestive systems.		
189	Dogs have been featured in contests and in entertainment. Every year,		
200	thousands of dogs compete in dog agility championships. Hard-working dogs		
210	and their trainers practice for months on obstacle courses. Also, dogs compete		
222	in “dog shows.” Dog owners have their dogs judged on beauty, grooming, and		
235	performance in various challenges. Some dogs, such as Lassie, have been the		
247	stars of television shows and movies.		
253	In the United States and some countries, there is a dog overpopulation problem. There are over 73		
270	million dogs in the United States alone. That is almost one dog for every four people! Adult dogs should be		
290	spayed or neutered to avoid having unwanted puppies. Lovable dogs can be adopted from many animal		
306	shelters at little cost.		
310	Most of the world’s dogs are owned by humans as pets, but there are still some wild packs of dogs in		
331	Africa and Asia. Some wild species of dogs, like the African Wild Dog, face some challenges as humans		
349	continue to spread into their habitat.		
355			
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“The Fox” Reading Fluency #22

<p>9 19 29 41 51 59 69 76 84 95 108 120 131 142 153 167 183 197 210 220 233 247 262 275 290 309 327 346 358 374 392 408 419</p>	<p>There are over twenty types of foxes in the wild. Red foxes are one type of fox. They have black ears and feet. Their tails are bushy and white at the tip. Some red foxes are not red, but most of them are. Red foxes can see, smell, and hear better than humans. Even though they have short legs, they can run very fast. In winter, red foxes grow extra fur to help keep them warm.</p> <p>Red foxes are found in many different places. They can be found in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. They mostly live in open grassy areas. Red foxes try to hide from humans as much as they can. Some red foxes live in forests. Wherever they live, red foxes each have their own territories. There, they can raise their families and make homes for their babies.</p> <p>Foxes are omnivores. Their diet ranges from small mammals to birds and fruit. Red foxes’ favorite foods are rodents. They like to eat small mice and rats. Once they find their prey, it is hard for their prey to escape. Red foxes are too fast for most of their victims. Sometimes, red foxes will even eat leftover food from humans like orange or banana peels. Red foxes hunt alone. Once they find food, they do not share it.</p> <p>Female red foxes will have about five to six babies. The babies are called <i>cubs</i>. Cubs are born blind. The red foxes make special homes for their babies called <i>dens</i>. Red foxes help their cubs along for the first five weeks of their lives. After the cubs are five weeks old, they leave their dens.</p> <p>Unlike wolves, red foxes do not form packs. They mainly stay to themselves. Sometimes, territories that are next to each other may overlap, but red foxes often fight each other over their territories. Each territory has only one male, his mate (or sometimes mates), and their cubs. Throughout their territory, red fox families build multiple dens. Often, they will take over other animals’ dens. The same dens are used by each generation of foxes. Red foxes stay in their home territories for life.</p> <p>The most significant predators of foxes are humans, coyotes, and wolves. Humans kill red foxes for their furs. Red foxes are important to the ecosystems in their habitats, because they control the rodent and rabbit populations. Although the red fox population may soon decrease due to overhunting in their habitats, as of now red foxes are not in danger of extinction.</p>	<p>territories multiple significant ecosystems</p>	
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“The Goose” Reading Fluency #23

<p>8 16 25 32 39 47 51 61 74 87 100 115 124 139 155 169 182 185 198 214 230 244 258 260 277 295 312 327 344 362 363 381 402 419 437</p>	<p>The goose is a medium to large bird.</p> <p>The plural of <i>goose</i> is <i>geese</i>. There are many kinds of geese in the world. One kind is the Canadian goose. Canadian geese are beautiful birds. They have a gray body with a white chest and chin. Their heads and necks are black.</p> <p>Canadian geese like to live close to water. Sometimes they move from one place to another. When they decide to move, they fly together. They fly in a V-shape called a <i>wedge</i>. On long flights, the birds change places. They do this because the birds in front get tired from flying into the wind. It’s easier to fly at the rear of the wedge. When they fly, the geese like to honk loudly.</p> <p>Canadian geese eat a lot of grass. When they eat, they grab the grass in their bills and then jerk their heads to tear out the grass. Geese will eat most any plant that grows near water, even seaweed! The geese also eat wheat, rice, and corn. Of course, this means that farmers usually don’t like Canadian geese to visit often.</p> <p>When geese are two years old, they look for mates. The partners usually stay together all their lives. The female lays about six eggs at a time. Both the mother and the father guard the nest. Lots of animals like to eat their eggs, so they have to watch the eggs carefully. The female has to be especially careful, because she loses some of her feathers before the eggs are hatched, so she can’t fly.</p> <p>These geese are generally <i>migratory</i>. This means that they lay eggs and hatch their chicks in cold climates, but fly south to warmer areas to spend the winter. However, for reasons that scientists don’t fully understand, many Canadian geese are now remaining in the warmer climates all year long. This has created problems for some communities because these geese have permanently settled anywhere where there is water. Golf courses and housing developments with small lakes now have the geese as unwanted guests. These geese can be very messy and because they aggressively defend their territories, they can injure people who come too close.</p> <p>They used to live only in North America. Now they are in Europe, too. Their numbers are growing due to the fact that many of their natural predators, such as the bald eagle, red fox, and gray wolf are declining. When the balance of animals changes in nature, some animal populations can grow larger than their habitats will allow. This seems to be the case with the overpopulation of Canadian geese in some areas.</p>	<p>Canadian especially migratory communities</p>	
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“The Horse” Reading Fluency #24

7 16 24 31 39 49 60 71 83 95 106 118 131 142 155 167 183 185 197 213 229 236 253 273 290 294 313 331 347 367 385 389	<p>Horses are some of the most important animals. At the bottom of their four long legs, they have <i>hooves</i>. Hooves are like human nails, but stronger and thicker. Horses have long necks and long heads. Their necks have special hair called a <i>mane</i>. Their eyes are big, so they can see all around them. Horses come in many different colors.</p> <p>People ride horses. They ride them to work on cattle ranches. They race them at racetracks. They also ride them for fun. Farmers use them to work on farms. Better fed horses serve their owners best. Horse owners feed their horses freshly cut hay. Some owners feed their horses grains such as corn and oats. Riding or working horses drink a lot of water. They need clean water at all times.</p> <p>Wild horses, also called <i>mustangs</i>, live in the Western United States, Western Canada, and parts of Southern China. Most wild horses live on wide, open grasslands and eat grass, flowers, and other plants. Other wild horses live in forests. In the winter, when grass is not available, they will eat the bark off trees.</p> <p>Female horses are pregnant for almost a full year. Usually, they have only one baby, called a <i>foal</i>, at a time. Horses reach full growth at about four to five years of age. In the wild, horses live in groups, under the control of one head male and one head female.</p> <p>Wild horses are designed to live in rough habitats. They usually have shorter backs, fuller manes, and lower set tails than horses raised on farms. The average horse lives for about twenty years in the wild. Since wolves have been eliminated in most areas where wild horses live, wild horses face few predators. Mountain lions are the exception.</p> <p>In 1978, a new federal law in the United States required that lands be improved to allow the wild horse population to survive. Since then, the wild horse population has seen a steady increase of about 15-20% more than the previous numbers. In addition, since the 1970s, over 175,000 wild horses have been tamed and adopted by people. At this time, the wild horses in the United States and Southern China face no threat of extinction. These beautiful animals continue to thrive on the farm, on ranches, in riding stables, and now in the wild.</p>	<p>hooves</p> <p>designed</p> <p>exception</p> <p>previous</p>	
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“The Jackrabbit” Reading Fluency #25

<p>9 The jackrabbit is not really a rabbit. It is 17 a <i>hare</i>. Jackrabbits don’t make good pets. They 25 are wild animals. Rabbits make very good pets. 33 Both do look alike. Usually, jackrabbits are a 40 little larger than rabbits. Jackrabbits are famous 49 for their large, floppy ears. They can be brown 57 or white with some black color. They are 60 covered in fur. 63 Jackrabbits can move very quickly. They run very fast. They 70 can run up to 45 miles per hour. They also leap very high and far. 85 Their speed and leaping help jackrabbits get away from danger 95 sometimes. Foxes, coyotes, owls, snakes, hawks, and people like to 105 hunt them. They can be a very tasty dinner. 114 Jackrabbits live most everywhere in the world. They make their homes 125 above ground in simple nests. Rabbits live underground in tunnels called 136 <i>burrows</i>. Jackrabbits don’t build nests for their babies, but rabbits do 147 build nests. Jackrabbit babies are born with complete fur and with their eyes 160 open, while rabbit babies have no fur and their eyes are closed. 172 Jackrabbits are <i>herbivores</i>. This means that they only eat plants. They 183 especially enjoy lettuce and other vegetables. Jackrabbits can be unwelcome 193 visitors to a vegetable garden because they eat so much. Farmers keep dogs 206 and cats to scare away the jackrabbits. Jackrabbits are most active at night. 219 They look for food when it’s dark. During the day, they rest in shady, grassy 234 areas. They keep their long ears flat against their backs and they crouch low to 249 the ground to avoid being seen. 255 Many cultures have interesting stories and myths about jackrabbits. In some African cultures, 268 jackrabbits are considered to be <i>tricksters</i>. This means that people think that these hares are smart trouble- 285 makers that have special powers. Some Africans believe that jackrabbits are bad luck. Americans believe that 300 a rabbit’s foot is good luck. From the Arabian culture, <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> is one of Aesop’s most 313 famous fables. 332 In Eastern cultures, jackrabbits play a huge role in literature and myths. The hare is a key animal in 341 the Chinese calendar. The “Year of the Rabbit” is actually the “Year of the Hare.” The Chinese also see the 361 imprint of the jackrabbit in the moon. The shadows of the seas on the moon surface do produce an image that 382 looks like a jackrabbit. The image certainly looks more like a jackrabbit than the “man in the moon.” 400</p>	<p>coyotes vegetable tortoise Aesop literature</p>		
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“The Kangaroo” Reading Fluency #26

<p>9 19 26 35 44 51 59 67 77 87 99 110 113 128 141 155 171 183 197 212 225 238 251 264 275 291 309 329 348 361 376 389</p>	<p>Kangaroos are one of few animals in the wild that jump more than they run. Their ears are long and pointed. But, kangaroos stand like humans. And, they hop like frogs! Their coat is mostly brown with white on the bottom. Some even have gray coats. They have long, powerful tails. Kangaroos are famous for the <i>pouches</i> on their bellies. They carry their babies in these pouches.</p> <p>In the wild, kangaroos are only found on one continent—Australia. Different types of kangaroos live in different areas, but mostly they live in grasslands near water. Some live in forests and still others live right outside of the city! Recently, the kangaroo habitat has increased.</p> <p>Like cows, kangaroos must eat their food, spit it back up, and then eat it again before they can store it. Some kangaroos graze at night, while others graze during the middle of the day. Kangaroos mostly eat grass and leaves. If they can find green plants that are not dead, they do not need to drink water. Kangaroos have special teeth that are designed for eating grasses. After they wear out, their back teeth fall out and new teeth grow in their place.</p> <p>Most kangaroos have only one baby, called a <i>joey</i>, at a time. The joey is warmed in its mother’s pouch and rides comfortably as she hops. At about nine months, the joey leaves his mother’s pouch for short periods. It stays with its mother for a total of eighteen months before fully leaving her. Kangaroos move in groups. The groups are made up of one male, several females, and their young. Groups can consist of hundreds of kangaroos.</p> <p>When kangaroos hop around, they use their powerful hind legs to push themselves off the ground. Their upper legs are strong, too. In fact, there have even been boxing events between kangaroos and men. The kangaroos always win. Kangaroos are very fast and can reach speeds of up to forty miles per hour! Also, when kangaroos are moving slowly, they often use their tail as an extra leg to help move themselves along.</p> <p>Before European settlement in Australia, kangaroos were endangered. But, as the Europeans prepared lands for farming with added irrigation, the kangaroo population grew. Since the massive extermination of the kangaroo’s main predator, the Tasmanian wolf, kangaroos have even overpopulated some areas.</p>	<p>European settlement irrigation extermination Tasmanian</p>	
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“The Lion” Reading Fluency #27

7	Lions are the second biggest cats in the wild. Mostly, lions are light brown.	savannahs
14	But, they also come in darker colors. Male	buffaloes
22	lions have very large <i>manes</i> . The mane is	hyenas
30	made up of many small dark hairs on the side	leopards
40	and back of the head. Lions are heavier than	
49	two people put together, but as fast as cars over short distances!	
61	In Africa, lions can be found on the <i>savannahs</i> . These are the	
73	grassy areas with shady trees. Central and southern Africa have	
83	many savannahs. Lions also live in India. Of course, they are very	
95	popular zoo animals. In America alone, there are hundreds of lions in	
107	zoos.	
108	In the wild, lions eat mainly large animals. They like to eat zebras,	
121	buffaloes, and even elephants. Sometimes, they eat smaller animals or reptiles	
132	as well. They even might attack livestock (cows) in villages for food. Often,	
145	lions will steal food from hyenas and leopards, after those animals kill their	
158	prey. Lions hunt in packs and use strategic attacks to kill their food. All female	
172	lions hunt, but only some male lions will hunt. If a male has a mate, he will not	
189	hunt. In the zoo, keepers give lions beef and horse tails to eat.	
204	Female lions usually give birth every two years. When they give birth,	
216	they usually have about one to five babies, called <i>cubs</i> . Only one out of five	
231	cubs survives the first two years of life. After two years of age, lions are taught	
246	to hunt. Lions live in large groups of females with few males. Groups, called	
260	<i>prides</i> , may even grow to forty lions.	
268	When a male enters a new pride, it is not uncommon for him to kill all the cubs in the pride that are	
291	unable to run from him. He kills the cubs to ensure that all the future cubs in the pride will share his blood.	
315	Although the adult lion has no natural predators, the main job of male lions is to protect the pride and its	
336	territory. Both males and females defend against outside lions that try to join their pride. In the wild, lions live	
356	about fifteen years.	
360	Lions are vulnerable to extinction. Massive efforts to expand the habitat of lions and provide them	
376	with sufficient prey have been somewhat successful. Thousands of years ago, lions used to roam the lands in	
394	North and South America, as well as in Europe and Asia. Scientists believe they died off in these areas due to	
415	human territorial expansion and disease.	
420		
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“The Mouse” Reading Fluency #28

<p>9 21 30 39 47 56 64 72 84 97 109 116 129 143 161 176 189 199 214 227 239 258 279 299 309 324 343 360 377 386</p>	<p>The mouse is a very small animal. A mouse is one kind of <i>rodent</i>. It is not a little rat. Two or more are called <i>mice</i>. Mice are only about six inches long. That includes a very long, thin tail. They are white, brown, or gray. Their whiskers are also long. They have pink, round ears. Most mice run along the ground. Some can hop.</p> <p>Mice can be found everywhere in the world. They live in grassy fields or forests. They live in mountain areas. They may also live in the walls of your home or apartment! Some live in science labs. There, they serve as <i>subjects</i> for study. Mice have helped scientists make many important discoveries.</p> <p>Mice have babies year-round. Their average litter size is a dozen. Their babies are called <i>pups</i>. They are born without hair and their eyes are closed. Although mice may live up to two years in a science lab or as a pet, most mice live only about six months in the wild. They are favorite meals for cats, foxes, hawks, and snakes. Mice eat grains, rodent pellets, and of course they love cheese. The cartoon character <i>mice</i> have always loved their cheese.</p> <p>In the wild, mice can be real pests. They eat farmer’s crops and they can also spread diseases. Some of the diseases are very serious. Mice are carriers of the deadly <i>hantavirus</i>, so it’s best to not handle wild mice.</p> <p>At home, mice can be wonderful pets. They are intelligent and very clean. They like to play and are fun to watch. Mice will allow people to hold them and some will even do tricks. They live up to the expression, “as quiet as a mouse.” To properly care for pet mice, you need a special cage or aquarium. They sleep on a nest of shredded wood or clean paper.</p> <p>Mice have always been popular subjects of literature. Mice are usually featured as intelligent and clever. They are also considered to be very <i>resourceful</i>. This means that mice are seen to be good problem-solvers and use their resources to their benefit. They also have starred in animated movies and cartoons. Of course, the most famous mouse would have to be Walt Disney’s “Mickey Mouse.” “Mickey Mouse” has appeared in thousands of movies, cartoons, television shows, and stories.</p>	<p>discoveries character hantavirus resourceful</p>	
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“The Newt” Reading Fluency #29

<p>7 The newt looks like a cross between 15 a lizard and a frog. Newts are <i>amphibians</i>. 23 They spend some of their lives in water 32 and some out of water. Newts are part of 39 the salamander family. They are dry and 45 bumpy. Other salamanders are wet and 56 smooth. Newts live mostly on land. Other salamanders live in water. 66 Newts have four legs. Other salamanders have just two. Most 73 salamanders are less than six inches long. 84 Newts are some of the oldest creatures on earth. They live most 97 everywhere in the world. They like to live in shady areas under 111 rocks, in hollow trees, or in holes that they dig. The holes are called 123 burrows. Newts stay close to water because this is where they have 125 their babies. 139 Newts hatch their babies from eggs. They lay their eggs on top of plants 154 in streams, ponds, or lakes. The newt mothers fold the plants over the eggs to 166 protect them. The mothers lay about twenty eggs, twice per year. The 179 newborns are called <i>tadpoles</i>. Just like frogs, they look more like fish when 194 they are born. They grow legs and their gills turn into lungs that breath air 198 after they are born. 211 All newts are <i>carnivores</i>, so they eat meat. They eat worms, snails, fish, 223 crayfish, and mice. They stalk their prey slowly and then pounce quickly. 236 Sometimes newts wait until the prey walks close by them. Newts have long 245 tongues that they use to snatch their unsuspecting meals. 262 Newts have a special ability to avoid being eaten by predators. Their skin produces a poison that 279 animals have learned to avoid. Native Americans in the Northwest used to harvest this poison from newts. 298 They tipped their arrows with this poison to kill their enemies. The poison is deadly to humans, so you 302 probably shouldn't taste test! 316 Newt populations have declined throughout the world, due to destruction of their habitats. Water 333 pollution has contributed greatly to the decline of the salamander population. The use of pesticides by farmers 348 has increased water pollution because they eventually wash into streams, lakes, and rivers. Some countries, 367 such as the United States and Great Britain, have passed laws to protect salamander habitats. It is even against 379 the law to own a salamander as a pet in Great Britain.</p>	<p>amphibians salamander contributed pesticides</p>	
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“The Pig” Reading Fluency #30

<p>11 The pig is also called a <i>hog</i> or a <i>swine</i>. Pigs 20 have short legs and fat bodies. Their bodies have 30 hair all over. Their heads are big and they have 39 noses called <i>snouts</i>. Pigs have sharp teeth. Two of 49 the teeth are called <i>tusks</i>. Pigs have four toes on 59 each of their four feet. Pigs can be pink, brown, 62 white, or black. 74 Pigs are found in all areas of the world. Pigs are <i>omnivores</i>, 85 which means that they eat both animals and plants. Farm-raised pigs 97 are well known for eating just about anything. They will eat insects, 107 worms, garbage, leaves, grass, fruit, and flowers. Most pigs are 118 raised by farmers for food. Pigs provide ham, bacon, pork chops, 129 and sausage. Pig meat is called <i>pork</i>. Some religions have rules 140 against eating pork. Farmers also raise pigs for their tough skins, 151 which are dried into leather. Footballs are called “pig skins” because 165 many are made from pigs. Pig hair is used to make hair brushes. 178 Female pigs are called <i>sows</i>. They have a litter of between six and 190 twelve babies. The babies are called <i>piglets</i>. Many children and teenagers raise 204 these piglets and “show” them in county fairs. The pigs are judged upon their 216 beauty, grooming, size, and weight. Young people earn medals or ribbons for 230 winning pigs and can even sell their pigs to the highest bidders at auction. 243 Pigs can’t cool themselves because they can’t sweat, so they roll in cool 258 mud during hot weather. The mud also protects them from flies and acts as a 272 sunscreen. Wild pigs are just as messy as farm pigs. Wild pigs can destroy 285 farm crops and gardens. They also can be aggressive and have even attacked 286 people. 302 Pigs are some of the smartest animals. Pot-bellied pigs have recently become very popular pets. They 322 can be walked like dogs, and they can even be trained to perform tricks. Pigs are used in medical research, 332 because many of their organs closely resemble those of humans. 347 Pigs are important cultural characters in countries throughout the world. Pigs have long been favorite 364 subjects of literature and cartoons. “Porky the Pig” is one of the most popular animal television characters. 384 “Babe” has starred in movies by the same name. The pig is even one of the animals on the twelve-year 398 Chinese cycle of animals. The “Year of the Pig” is part of their calendar.</p>	<p>religions sausage auction aggressive</p>	
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“The Quail” Reading Fluency #31

10 17 25 34 42 50 62 74 88 102 104 117 131 144 159 174 189 203 213 227 241 256 269 285 302 319 339 351 369 389 410 428 447 464 472	<p>The quail is a bird that is part of the pheasant family. These birds all have six feathers on top of their heads. These feathers look like a hat. Quail are mostly gray. They have black faces. They also have big bellies. The quail is the state bird of California.</p> <p>Quail live in many parts of the world. In fact, quail were brought into many countries. Most types of quail live in the same place all year. They walk more than they fly. Some quail, such as the quail in Japan, do fly to warmer places in the winter. These quail fly long distances.</p> <p>Quail like stay in small flocks called <i>coveys</i>. They like to look for food with other quail. Quail mostly eat seeds, but sometimes they will eat insects, berries, and leaves. The birds scratch the ground like chickens to find their food. The quail also like to take baths together. But, they use dirt, not water, to clean themselves. A group of quail picks a sunny place with soft dirt. The quail dig down 1-2 inches into soft dirt. They then flap their wings until the surrounding dirt and dust showers them all. Then, they leave the hole and flap their wings until the dirt and dust come off.</p> <p>Female quail lay many eggs each year, but about a dozen at one time. The group of eggs is called a <i>clutch</i>. Families combine so that there is always at least one mother quail to watch the baby chicks. They hide their nests under bushes or sometimes rocks because many other animals like to eat quail eggs. Quail warn each other with a variety of calls if there is danger to the clutch.</p> <p>Animals aren't the only ones that like quail eggs. Many people prefer quail eggs instead of chicken eggs. Some people even enjoy pickled quail eggs. In fact, quail eggs are becoming more popular. Quail farmers now raise quails for their eggs and their meat. Quail is served at some of the finest restaurants and some of the best chefs prepare these birds in many different ways.</p> <p>Quail hunting is also very popular. Hunters look for quail and when they find them, they “flush” the birds into flight. The quail fly up from the ground very fast, and then they re-settle somewhere else just as fast. The hunters must be ready to shoot and react quickly. Hunters must be good shots in order to get these game birds. Some ranchers invite groups of hunters to hunt quail on their land. These ranchers encourage the growth of the quail population on their land because the ranchers charge the hunters to hunt these game birds. Because of the increasing popularity of the quail, the population is certainly growing in some areas. However, the population is diminishing in expanding urban areas.</p>	<p>pheasant coveys surrounding</p>	
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“The Raccoon” Reading Fluency #32

7 14 24 31 39 44 51 62 72 84 98 103 115 128 143 155 167 180 186 199 215 230 244 261 274 295 314 334 348 363 382 399 418 429	<p>A raccoon looks like a masked robber. Raccoons are mostly gray. But, around their eyes they have a black mask of fur. They are medium-sized and furry. They have long, bushy tails. Raccoons have short legs and soft paws. Their claws are very sharp.</p> <p>Raccoons live in North America and in Europe. They are mainly forest animals. They climb trees with their sharp claws. Climbing helps them escape from other animals. Other raccoons live close to people near towns. Raccoons like to eat the same food as people. You might find one looking for food in a trash can or in a landfill.</p> <p>Instead of sleeping at night and hunting in the daylight like most animals, raccoons sleep during the day and find food at night. Some raccoons are active in the day, but most are not. Raccoons are <i>omnivores</i>, so they eat both plants and animals. They eat mostly insects, bugs, worms, birds, and lizards. Sometimes, raccoons can be found sitting on rocks in a stream, fishing with their claws. They are also <i>scavengers</i>. That means that they will eat the dead bodies of animals.</p> <p>Female raccoons will usually have two to five babies at a time. Babies, called <i>kits</i>, are born blind and deaf. The father has no part in raising the kits. After only six to nine weeks, male kits will leave their homes. By that time, they are ready to find their own food and live by themselves. Most raccoons live only a few years in the wild. Most of them end up dying by disease or sickness. They usually don't live long in the wild because of their diet.</p> <p>In the wild, raccoons may be able to weigh up to sixty pounds! This is because they store up fat in their bodies to keep warm during the winter. In the winter months, they stay mostly inactive. Raccoons sleep a lot when it is cold outside. Although they sleep a lot, raccoons do not hibernate like some animals such as bears. They remain alert and can wake up quickly if predators come to attack.</p> <p>Raccoons are not threatened or endangered. At different points in history, the raccoon population has neared extinction due to hunting. Their thick fur is prized for coats and hats. But, the population has slowly made a comeback in recent history. Still today, professional trappers catch raccoons for their fur. In most places, it is illegal to keep raccoons as pets, although some people still keep them. They are dangerous to have as pets, because they may act aggressively in some situations.</p>	<p>scavengers inactive situations</p>	
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“The Seagull” Reading Fluency #33

<p>10 The seagull is one type of gull. A gull is 19 just one kind of bird. There are over 1,000 29 kinds of birds in the world. The seagull is a 38 bird that we often see at the beach. Seagulls 46 are medium to large birds. They are usually 54 gray or white with some black color. They 64 have curved yellow bills. They squawk and screech loudly. Seagulls 68 are also very smart. 77 Seagulls are found throughout Canada and the United States. 89 They usually live in coastal areas. Some live inland near lakes and 101 rivers. Seagulls can drink both fresh and saltwater. They can fly long 113 distances. Some gulls live on islands far from the coast. They travel 124 many miles from their island homes each day. They visit beaches 131 and coastal areas to get food. 145 Mothers lay two to three eggs at a time. Seagulls are very protective of 161 their babies. They take care of them for up to six months after they are born, 174 providing food and protection. Some of the babies will remain close to their 185 mothers even after they have grown up. Seagull families form expanded 198 family units called <i>colonies</i>. All birds in the colonies work together to protect 209 their territories by attacking predators as large groups. Some seagulls have 218 been known to attack people, but this is rare. 229 Seagulls are <i>carnivores</i>, so they eat meat. They mostly eat fish, 240 shellfish, and small rodents. However, seagulls will eat anything that people 253 leave behind. They will eat rotting meat and garbage at landfills. They will 265 even eat left-over candy, cigarette butts, and french fries at the beach. 282 The better their diet, the longer seagulls live. The average seagull lives 10 to 12 years. However, 301 some have been known to live much longer. Their life spans also depend upon the type and number of 317 predators in the seagulls' habitats. Some individual gulls have been known to live over 25 years. 333 Because seagulls can live in many places, they have become problem pests in some areas. They 352 gather in farming areas, in landfills, or even on school grounds, looking for food to eat. Their droppings are 372 smelly and hard to clean. Half of the birds that crash into airplanes are seagulls. Seagulls have been known to 385 crack airplane windows and cause much damage if they fly into the engines.</p>	<p>protective colonies cigarette individual</p>	
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“The Tiger” Reading Fluency #34

8	Tigers are the largest cats in the wild.	Vietnam crocodiles challenge reintroducing
15	Most tigers have orange and brown coats.	
22	Their stripes are black. Some very rare	
29	tigers are mostly white. Males are longer	
37	than females. Tiger teeth are sharp and very	
38	long.	
46	In the wild, tigers live mostly in forests.	
60	But, they also live in the jungle. In the forest or jungle, tigers can	
72	blend in with their stripes. Tigers must live next to water. Unlike	
84	other cats, which avoid water, tigers seek it out. They are excellent	
97	swimmers and can swim up to four miles. Wild tigers can only be	
108	found in Asia. Most of them live in Vietnam and India.	
119	Different types of tigers hunt different animals, but all tigers are	
128	carnivores. Mostly, tigers eat medium-sized animals. Common prey includes	
138	boars, pythons, leopards, crocodiles, and monkeys. Tigers hunt alone. They	
150	stalk their prey before attacking and overpowering it. Mostly, tigers kill their	
163	prey by strangling the prey with their jaws. But, sometimes they will strike	
177	their prey with their paws. After taking their prey, tigers often carry their prey	
189	to other places. Tigers have been known to carry heavy livestock while	
196	running and jumping over fences or rocks!	
208	Female tigers have baby <i>cubs</i> after months of pregnancy. At eight weeks	
223	of age, baby cubs are ready to leave the den with their mother. The mother	
240	trains the cubs for about two and a half years. The father is not involved in this	
251	training. After training, female cubs find territory near their mothers, while	
260	males find another male’s territory to challenge and control.	
279	Tigers breed very well in zoos. Due to this, the tiger population in zoos may soon equal the entire	
297	world’s population of wild tigers! An estimated 12,000 tigers are being kept as private pets. In Texas alone,	
314	there are an estimated 4,000 pet tigers! Only nineteen states have banned private ownership of tigers. Fifteen	
328	states require a license to own one, and sixteen have no rules at all!	
346	Illegal hunting, called <i>poaching</i> , has led to the decrease of the tiger population in the wild. An illegal	
363	tiger fur trade has encouraged illegal hunting. Efforts to restore natural habitat to tigers have been successful in	
379	India, China, and Russia. Projects involving reintroducing tigers into the wild have been largely unsuccessful	
381	in India.	
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“The Vulture” Reading Fluency #35

7 15 23 30 37 44 54 65 76 88 97 112 126 136 152 168 184 185 199 211 223 235 246 265 284 300 319 336 351 371 391 408 411	<p>The vulture is not the most beautiful bird. But, other vultures like the way they look. They are largely black or brown birds with white under their wings. Their heads and necks have no feathers. Their powerful beaks are curved. Vulture wings are huge.</p> <p>These birds are found on every continent, except for Antarctica and Australia. Vultures are <i>scavengers</i>. That means that they eat the dead bodies of animals. Dead bodies are called <i>corpses</i>. Vultures in Africa, Asia, and Europe look for corpses by sight. Those in North and South America find their corpses mostly by smell.</p> <p>When vultures find an animal that is hurt, they will circle high in the sky above the animal. They wait until the animal dies to land and begin eating. Sometimes vultures will kill the weakened animal. Vultures feed individually or in groups. They will eat until full and then rest to digest the food before leaving. If the hide of an animal is too thick for vultures to tear, the vultures will wait for other animals to begin the meal, and then they will clean up what remains.</p> <p>Vultures are very important to the web of life. They are part of nature’s recycling. Vultures eat all but the smallest pieces and bone. The smallest pieces are then eaten by decomposers, such as bugs. The remaining chemicals can then be used again by plants and animals. Without decomposers and scavengers, the world would be covered with dead plants and animals.</p> <p>Even though vultures have an important part to play in the web of life, many people fear these birds. Vultures are, of course, closely related to death. In the Western world, the image of the vulture is very negative. Vultures frequently serve as metaphors for cowardly behavior in literature, in poetry, or in speech. In the Eastern world, the image of the vulture is more positive. Vultures are seen as necessary contributors to the cycle of life. In fact, some Buddhist death ceremonies encourage vultures to eat dead human corpses.</p> <p>The vulture population in agricultural India, Nepal, and Pakistan has seriously declined in the past decade. This decline is due to the fact that medicine used to treat farm animals has poisoned vultures as they eat the medicated animal corpses. As a result, other scavengers such as dogs and rats have taken over for the vultures. These animals are more likely than vultures to carry disease, such as rabies, and create health problems for people.</p>	<p>Antarctica corpses chemicals ceremonies</p>	
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“The Wolf” Reading Fluency #36

<p>9 17 26 35 44 52 61 63 75 88 98 103 117 130 143 158 172 186 201 214 229 242 256 269 283 296 301 315 331 352 362 378 396 407</p>	<p>Wolves are a lot like dogs. But, they are bigger and stronger than most dogs. Wolves have strong legs and bodies. They run very fast. They also run for a long time without being tired. Wolves have strong paws. They can run on ice and rocks. Wolves have very furry coats. Their coats can have shades of gray, white, brown, red, or black.</p> <p>Wolves live in almost all parts of the world. They like colder areas, but they can live in warm areas, too. Some wolves live in forests. Others live in the mountains. Wolves live almost anywhere except the rainforest and desert.</p> <p>Wolves like to eat sheep, goats, and deer. Since they are fast and strong, wolves are able to hunt prey much larger than they are. Sometimes, wolves will eat small prey, too. Wolf packs use strategic hunting to surround their prey and strike at the perfect time. Wolves do not chase their prey. If they cannot catch it at first, they will usually let it go. Wolves also practice “surplus killing,” in which they kill many animals at once and save them for meals later. But, wolves do not need to eat even for long periods of time. They have been known to go up to seventeen days without a meal!</p> <p>A group of wolves is called a <i>pack</i>. A mother and father pair leads each wolf pack. This pair solves any problems within the group and they control the food. Most of these pairs stay together for their entire lives. They have babies, called <i>pups</i>, and raise them within the pack. Wolves are ranked within a pack by fighting each other. In large packs, the ranking of different wolves may change often. Packs can contain up to twenty wolves, but they most commonly consist of just eight.</p> <p>Wolves often howl to communicate with each other. Howling allows packs of wolves to communicate with each other, because they can hear each other even through very thick forests. Sometimes, wolves howl for no apparent reason. Scientists think that they may howl to bond with each other in a form of friendship. Scientists compare this type of howling to human singing.</p> <p>For years, wolves were hunted to protect farmers’ livestock. Laws were passed to protect wolves and these animals were reintroduced in some areas. There are now over 9,000 wolves in the United States alone. Recently, wolves were officially taken off the U.S. Endangered Species List.</p>	<p>strategic surplus entire apparent friendship</p>	
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“The X-ray Fish” Reading Fluency #37

<p>8 16 25 34 44 53 62 72 86 99 110 121 136 150 161 173 188 202 216 217 231 245 261 275 279 297 316 336 352 374 388 408 429 431</p>	<p>The x-ray fish is a fish you can see through. These fish have very little skin. It just covers their bellies. The rest of the body is covered in a thin silver <i>sac</i>. You can see the bones of these fish! That is why they are called x-ray fish. There are a few spots of color on these fish, but not many.</p> <p>These fish come from South America. The tropical river areas have a lot of these little fish. They are freshwater fish, not salt-water fish. Although, the x-ray fish can live in almost any type of water. Now many of them live in homes called <i>aquariums</i>. Aquariums are homes that people make for fish and other water animals. Aquariums can be as small as a tiny fishbowl or as large as a football field.</p> <p>X-ray fish don't like to swim at the top or bottom of rivers and aquariums. They like swimming in the middle depths. These fish establish their own territories in aquariums. They mark out certain spots between plants and they tend to stay much of their time in these spots. Male and female partners usually swim in groups, but they rest close to one another. Males are thinner than females. The females lay eggs and can have lots of baby x-ray fish.</p> <p>X-ray fish are very popular aquarium fish and can be found in most all tropical fish stores. They do well with flake fish food, but they are <i>omnivores</i>. This means that they eat not only plants, but also other fish. Any fish they eat have to be small enough, because both male and female x-ray fish are only about one-inch long.</p> <p>Fish can be wonderful pets. However, they do require a lot of care. For freshwater fish, their water must be kept fresh. This means that fish owners have to change water often. Usually, people buy filters for larger fish tanks if they keep more than a few fish. The filter keeps the water fresh by circulating it continuously. The chemical balance and temperature of the water must be appropriate. Otherwise, the fish can get sick and die. X-ray fish are some of the easiest fish to care for because they survive well in non-moving water, in hard water (with few minerals), and in soft water (with more minerals).</p> <p>Fish owners do have to be careful about their mix of fish. Some types of fish get along better than others. The fish habitat needs to be planned well to provide the right features for the types of fish that the owners collect.</p>	<p>aquariums circulating continuously temperature</p>	
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“The Yak” Reading Fluency #38

<p>9 17 25 33 42 50 56 66 78 91 101 118 130 143 155 167 181 193 209 226 230 248 265 281 298 310 327 346 363</p>	<p>The yak is a large animal that lives in the mountains of Asia. Yaks are strong, heavy cattle. They are white, brown, or black. Their hearts and lungs are very large. This helps them live in the mountains, where the air is thin. They have long, shaggy hair. The shaggy hair keeps them from the cold.</p> <p>Yaks live in the Himalaya Mountains of Central Asia. Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, is located there. They also live in Mongolia, which is north of China. Yaks do not live in lowland areas. They like high grasslands that have no trees.</p> <p>Yaks like to stay in a group, called a <i>herd</i>. A yak herd has from ten to thirty animals. Yaks will huddle together on cold winter nights or during snowstorms to keep warm. Yak females are pregnant for nine months, just like human mothers. The average lifespan of a yak is about twenty years.</p> <p>Farmers have many uses for yaks. Yaks produce milk and farmers make cheese and butter from that milk. Yaks also have very tasty meat. Yaks are often used as pack animals. They carry burdens across high mountain passes for farmers. Yaks pull plows to dig up the farm soil for planting. Yak hairs are spun into yarn for knitting. The hair is used to make rope and rugs. Yak hide is used to make shoes.</p> <p>In parts of the Himalayan region of Tibet, yak racing is a part of special celebrations. Tibetans enjoy seeing these large cattle race against each other. Business people are also using yaks to promote tourism. Some Tibetans have recently begun using yaks to pull cross-country skiers. For years, yaks have been employed to carry hiking gear for hikers and climbers. As hiking and climbing in the Himalayas become increasingly popular, yaks may have a greater role in the near future.</p> <p>The once large wild yak population of Central Asia is now threatened by extinction. Yak hunting has not been controlled by governments. The profit motive for yak hunting is high. Hunters have killed too many of these animals to maintain a healthy population. The future of wild yaks in Central Asia remains uncertain.</p>	<p>Himalaya Tibetans tourism uncertain</p>	
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“The Zebra” Reading Fluency #39

7 15 24 33 42 51 55 66 78 90 102 113 123 134 147 161 173 188 190 201 214 225 238 253 267 275 290 308 323 334 349 367 385 393	<p>Zebras are black or dark animals with white stripes and bellies. Zebras look and act like horses. On the tops of their heads, they have short manes of hair. Their eyes are on the sides of their heads. They can see and hear very well. Zebras are about the size of small horses and donkeys.</p> <p>In Africa, zebras live in grassy areas. They mostly live away from trees. But, some types of zebras like trees. Others live in grassy hills or mountains near the ocean or sea. Every rainy season, zebras leave their homes and move. They depend on water in the dry season and they never live too far away from water holes. Zebras can be found in zoos across the world.</p> <p>Zebras are omnivores and grazing animals, like cows and horses. They search out grassy areas and slowly eat away the grass. Sometimes, they eat small bushes, leaves, twigs, or bark as well. They spend most of their day eating and finding food. Without rain, zebras cannot survive. They depend on the rain to make the grasses grow and to provide them with water for drinking and bathing.</p> <p>As highly social animals, zebras live in large groups. Males without female partners live alone or with groups of other bachelors until they are strong enough to challenge another male for his mate. Zebras make permanent bonds with each other. Females give birth to one baby, called a <i>foal</i>, about once a year. Foals are brown and white instead of black and white at birth. Babies can stand and walk by themselves soon after they are born. Their mothers nurse them for about one year.</p> <p>Many people have attempted to domesticate zebras for riding or doing work. These attempts have been largely unsuccessful over the years. Unlike horses and donkeys, zebras tend to panic when they are put into stressful situations. However, some successful attempts at taming zebras have occurred. A few zebras have been trained to pull wagons and even perform in circuses.</p> <p>Human contact with zebras has always decreased the zebra habitat, but mostly since the Nineteenth Century. Zebras were, and still are, hunted for their shiny black and white coats. Different species of zebras are more threatened than others. The chief natural predators of zebras are lions. As the lion population rises or declines, the zebra population rises or declines.</p>	<p>social</p> <p>bachelors</p> <p>domesticate</p>	
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“The Sheep” Reading Fluency #40

7	Sheep are animals with thick, curly fur.		
17	They are about as big as most large dogs. Sheep	occasionally	
26	look a lot like goats. Different types of sheep	effective	
34	come in different colors. Most sheep are white	sheepherders	
42	or brown. Some sheep have long fur. Others	medicate	
52	have short fur. Still others have no fur at all!	qualities	
60	Sheep are raised on farms or ranches. They		
70	are raised for their fur, called <i>wool</i> . They are also		
83	raised for their meat. Sheep can be found all over the world. China,		
93	Australia, India, and Iran have the largest amounts of sheep.		
105	Different types of sheep live better in different areas. They can live		
113	in open grassy areas, deserts, and in valleys.		
125	Sheep are herbivores. This means that they only eat plants. They usually		
140	eat grass, leaves, and stems. Often, when sheep eat their food, they will spit it		
154	out and re-chew it like cows. Sheep spend most of their day grazing (finding		
167	food). They prefer shorter grasses to longer ones. The best land for sheep		
181	grazing is land with many different types of grasses. Sheep also need to have		
187	lots of clean water to drink.		
200	Sheep live in groups called <i>flocks</i> . Most sheep find mates about once a		
214	year. Males fight each other to become the most powerful male of the group. If		
229	males, called <i>rams</i> , are left alone together, they might hurt or even kill each		
242	other! Baby sheep are called <i>lambs</i> . Usually, sheep live for about ten to twenty		
244	years.		
261	Since female sheep are slow moving and have no horns, they have no way of protecting themselves.		
280	Their chief predator is the coyote. But, occasionally they will become the victim of a dog, mountain lion, or		
297	bear. To protect their sheep, farmers often use guard dogs, guard llamas, or even guard donkeys. Guard		
319	animals are raised in the same habitat as the sheep to allow them to form a personal bond with the sheep. The		
334	guard animals are also effective sheepherders. They can gather a flock of sheep very quickly.		
349	Although sheep have the reputation for being unintelligent animals, sheep are very smart and clever		
368	in their own ways. Sheep are excellent at remembering faces. They can remember up to fifty faces of other		
384	sheep or even humans. According to researchers, sheep even form friendships with certain other sheep. Some		
402	sheep have even been known to self-medicate themselves. If they are sick, they choose to eat certain plants		
419	that have healing abilities. These human-like qualities prove that sheep are not as dumb as people sometimes		
424	make them out to be.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	Total Number of Mistakes	Total Number of Mistakes	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	

“The Whale” Reading Fluency #41

7 13 9 15 28 42 55 66 78 90 100 112 125 136 149 162 173 186 199 212 226 229 251 266 281 290 305 322 339 355 368 386 407 417	<p>The whale is the largest animal on earth. Many whales are bigger than elephants, but some are smaller. There are many types of whales. One of the largest whales is the humpback whale. Humpback whales are usually about 50 feet long. They weigh as much as 44 big trucks. The largest one ever measured was 88 feet long. Humpback whales have large humps on their backs. Their fins are very long. Their tail is wavy-shaped and very large.</p> <p>Humpback whales live in all the major oceans. They move a lot. Every summer, most humpbacks swim to cooler ocean waters. Some swim as many as 16,000 miles. Then, they swim back to tropical waters in the winter. There they have babies and eat a lot. Humpback whales are mammals, so they have live births. The baby whales are called <i>calves</i>. Mother whales are very protective of their calves and will sometimes attack boats that get too close to their babies. Once calves leave their mothers, they like stay by themselves. Humpback whales will group for feeding or play, but they spend most of their time alone.</p> <p>They eat in a variety of ways. Since humpbacks are <i>baleen</i> whales, they open their mouths wide and swim into groups of fish and plankton. The whales have a strainer in their throats that separates the water from their meal. Humpback whales will quickly lunge into an area to surprise fish. They will also slap the ocean surface to “shock” fish into staying still. Sometimes, groups of humpback whales will gather together and stir the water up so that it produces a wall of bubbles, which traps the fish. They only eat in the summer and live off fat reserves during the winter months.</p> <p>The whaling industry reduced the world population of humpback whales to dangerously low levels in the last century. Since the 1960s, most countries have agreed to ban hunting humpback whales. Also, poisons have killed many whales. Sometimes the whales get trapped in fishing nets or rammed by ships. Fortunately, the humpback whales have increased in numbers recently, but they will remain on protected species lists.</p> <p>Whale-watching tours have become very popular since the 1990s. Humpback whales are most frequently the main attractions. They are very curious animals and will come very close to boats. They also enjoy leaping into the air and splashing, which is known as <i>breeching</i>. They can also blow water 10 to 15 feet in the air. They also sing very loud “whale songs.”</p>	<p>protective</p> <p>baleen</p> <p>frequently</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Python” Reading Fluency #42

6 12 21 28 35 42 47 60 71 83 93 106 109 119 132 143 155 167 181 187 198 212 226 242 255 267 283 300 321 326 341 358 373 382	<p>Pythons are snakes that are not poisonous. Adult pythons are all different sizes. They can be from one foot long to thirty feet long! Different types of pythons have different colors. Some are bright and green. Others are dark and brown. Pythons blend in with their surroundings.</p> <p>In the wild, pythons are found all over the East. They can be found in Africa, India, Vietnam, and Australia. They mostly live in wet areas, like rain forests or swamps. But, some live in grasslands or woodlands. Brown pythons live mostly in areas covered by brown trees or dirt. Green pythons tend to stay in areas with green leaves or trees.</p> <p>Unlike many snakes, pythons kill their prey without poison. Instead, pythons hunt down their prey and wrap themselves around it until it cannot breathe. Different types of pythons eat different animals. Large pythons may even eat deer or gazelles! Smaller pythons mostly eat smaller animals like rodents or reptiles. Pythons swallow their prey whole. It may even take several days or weeks to digest the food. Although they are big and strong, pythons do not usually threaten humans.</p> <p>Female pythons lay eggs, unlike some snakes which have live babies. After they lay their eggs, females will sit on them until they hatch. While sitting on the eggs, pythons move their muscles to provide heat for the eggs. They only leave their eggs to rest in the sun to get warmer for the eggs. Females will not eat until their eggs are hatched. Females only have babies once every two to four years, because the process is so difficult.</p> <p>Pythons are some of the biggest predators in their habitats. However, small, young pythons are in danger from attacks from other animals. Often, birds, other mammals, frogs, and even other snakes will hunt down baby pythons. Adult pythons are also at risk to large birds of prey, like eagles or hawks, and to large carnivores like lions and leopards.</p> <p>At least two known species of pythons are currently endangered. Other python species are also declining due to deforestation of the rain forests, other habitat destruction, and the snakeskin trade. Snake skins have been used for clothing, shoes, purses, and decoration. However, designers have not included snake skins in their fashion lines for many years.</p>	<p>poisonous several decoration fashion</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

“The Sheep” Reading Fluency #43

6 15 22 29 38 47 61 72 83 96 106 117 120 129 140 153 166 181 197 208 220 234 249 262 273 286 303 321 338 348 365 381 388	<p>The cheetah is the fastest animal on land. Cheetahs can run as fast as most cars over short distances. Unlike many cats, cheetahs have a narrow waist, making them smaller and less heavy than a lion or tiger. Their fur is rough and short. Their color is light brown and white with spots of black. Their tails have a ball of fur at the end. Unlike most big cats, cheetahs cannot roar.</p> <p>In Africa, cheetahs mainly live in the hot grassy areas. These areas are called the savannah. It can get very warm on the African savannah. Less frequently, cheetahs live in the mountains or in forests. They are mostly found in Africa, but some cheetahs also live in Asia.</p> <p>Cheetahs are carnivores. They eat mostly medium-sized animals like gazelles. Sometimes, they will hunt for zebras or wildebeests, too. While other big cats (like lions) hunt only at night, cheetahs hunt during the daytime. Also, while many animals use their sense of smell to hunt, cheetahs hunt with their excellent eye-sight. Once they have found their prey, they slowly follow until there is an open field. Cheetahs then use a burst of speed to catch their prey.</p> <p>Male cheetahs live in groups, while females live alone. Males are territorial. Females do not have territories; instead, they share land with other females. Females have about three to five babies at a time. The mothers raise these baby <i>cubs</i> for 18 months. During this time, the cubs learn how to hunt and avoid predators. After this time, the mothers leave their babies. The cubs stay together for another six months. After that, the females separate themselves from the group of their siblings. The males live together for life.</p> <p>As the smallest and least powerful predators in their habitat, cheetahs try to avoid contact with lions, leopards, hyenas, and wild dogs. Since cheetahs are designed for extreme bursts of speed and not for power, baby cubs are often targeted by these large predators. Mother cheetahs will defend their young and are sometimes successful. Males will form groups to chase off predators.</p> <p>Cheetah cubs have an unusually high death rate due to their predators. About 13,000 cheetahs still live in the wild today. Cheetah conservation efforts have been somewhat successful in South Africa and Iran. However, cheetahs are generally vulnerable to extinction.</p>	<p>cheetah gazelles generally vulnerable</p>	
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
	- Total Number of Mistakes	- Total Number of Mistakes	
	= Total Number of Words Read	= Total Number of Words Read	

The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets

The 43 **SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets** feature brief, high-interest expository articles with inferential questions. Each article describes an animal and details its life cycle, habitat, and role within its own ecosystem. The articles include the same text as those used for fluency practice.

The articles are leveled in a unique pyramid design: the first two paragraphs are at an adjusted third grade (*Fleish-Kincaid*) level (after deleting a few key multi-syllabic words such as *carnivores* or long animal names such as *armadillos*); the next two paragraphs are at the fifth grade level; and the last two are at the seventh grade level. The reader begins practice at an easier level to build confidence and then moves to more challenging academic language and sentence length.

The **SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets** each include five inferential questions—one question for each of the five reading comprehension strategies and their corresponding **SCRIP Comprehension Cues**. The **SCRIP** acronym stands for **S**ummarize, **C**onnect, **R**e-think, **I**nterpret, and **P**redict.

The questions are placed in the right-hand margin and require students to interact with the article. Students answer the questions in the margins. Additionally, three key vocabulary words are **boldfaced**. Students should define and use vocabulary words in original context clue sentences on the back of their worksheets. Each worksheet takes students about fifteen minutes to



“The Ape” Comprehension Worksheet #1

The ape is a very interesting animal. One type of ape is the orangutan. Male orangutans can weigh as much as two normal size humans. Females weigh about half as much. Orangutans have long, strong arms and their hands and feet are shaped like hooks. They are shaggy and have red hair.

Orangutans used to live all over Southeast Asia. Now they only live in a few rain forests on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Orangutans swing from tall trees to move around. It is warm where these animals live, but not too warm. There is a lot of rain there, so trees and plants grow very tall and big.

Orangutans are *omnivores*, since they eat some birds and small mammals. However, they mostly eat plants, like fruit and leaves, instead of meat. Their diet consists of mostly fruit. The fruits they tend to prefer have a lot of sugar in them. Figs are the favorite fruit of the orangutans. Figs come from trees and they are easy for orangutans to pick and eat. Orangutans also eat lots of young leaves from many trees in their habitat.

Unlike many other animals, orangutans are single adults, so they have no family structure. Mother orangutans raise their children one at a time. The baby rides on its mother’s back for three years at the start of its life. There, it learns how to pick food and protect itself from danger. Female orangutans usually have one baby every six years. Older male orangutans may fight each other for the attention of the available female orangutans.

The territory of an adult orangutan is not clearly established, as is the case with many animals. Often, orangutan territories will overlap. However, this does not mean that orangutans are social animals. They limit their social **interaction** to feeding, mating, and calling each other. Only rarely will orangutans get in fights with each other over food or territory. In these fights, the apes will **demonstrate** their strength by destroying branches, charging at each other, and biting each other until one gives up.

Due to deforestation of the rain forest (cutting down trees for grazing or farmland), orangutans are becoming more and more endangered with each day. Palm oil farmers have cut down much of the forest on Sumatra and Borneo. Some people even capture orangutans to use them as pets in their homes. Orangutans are already on international endangered species lists, and their habitat has been increasingly threatened by humans, mainly through the deforestation of the rain forest.

Predict

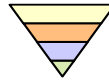


(1) Why has the habitat of orangutans decreased?

Re-think

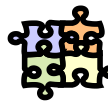
(2) How do orangutans depend on their habitat?

Summarize



(3) Summarize their family relationships.

Connect



(4) What other animals prefer independence and being alone to close relationships?

Interpret



(5) How could orangutans be saved?

“The Eagle” Comprehension Worksheet #2

The eagle is a huge bird. One type of eagle is the bald eagle. This bird of prey has a large yellow beak shaped like a hook and a pure white head. Its body is brown with a white tail. Female bald eagles are much bigger than males.

Bald eagles live all over North and South America. They make their nests near rivers, ponds, and lakes. There they can find many fish. Bald eagles build the biggest nests of any bird in America. Mostly, the birds stay away from people. Some birds move their nests frequently.

Bald eagles eat whatever they can find. But, mostly they eat fish. Some of their favorite meals are trout and salmon. To catch fish, bald eagles swoop down over the water and grab the fish with their feet, called **talons**. If the fish is too heavy for the eagle to carry, it might have to swim in the water. Many eagles aren't able to swim very well. Sometimes, bald eagles will steal their food from other birds that are smaller.

At about five years old, bald eagles find mates. They pick partners as their mates for life. Sometimes, if the pair cannot have a baby, they will find new partners. Babies are hatched from eggs in their nests, which are made from twigs and branches. Nests are usually in trees near open water. Mother and father eagles will take turns watching the eggs while the mate finds food or adds on to the nest.

The bald eagle is also an important symbol of the United States of America. It is known as the national bird of the United States. In 1782, the Continental Congress named the bald eagle as the national bird. Ben Franklin once wrote that he thought that it was a bad choice. He said the bald eagle was too cowardly to **symbolize** the nation. Instead, he suggested the turkey. Today, the bald eagle appears on official seals of the United States on the backs of several coins. It was on the back of the quarter until 1999, with its head turned towards an olive branch.

The bald eagle used to be a common sight in the United States. But, over the nation's history, this eagle's population has slowly decreased. This decrease is due to hunting and the use of pest spray by farmers. Many farmers used to spray DDT to reduce pests on their crops. This spray, when breathed by eagles, made them unable to have babies. Fortunately, the bald eagle population has begun to increase since DDT was **banned** as a pest spray. The bald eagle was officially removed from the list of endangered species in 1995.

Interpret



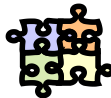
(1) Why might bald eagles move their nests so often?

Re-think



(2) Why might eagles be poor swimmers?

Connect



(3) Why would the location near water be important?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the selection of the bald eagle as the national bird.

Predict



(5) Why might the future of the bald eagle be safer than that of other endangered species?



“The Ibex” Comprehension Worksheet #3

An ibex is a wild goat. Ibexes have big, long horns that turn behind their heads. The horns have spiky bumps on them. Their fur is very short, and not shaggy like a dog’s fur. As the weather warms, the fur gets darker. Ibexes are about five feet long and three feet high. They weigh about as much as two people put together.

Ibexes live in the mountains. They are found in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Their homes are made in the rocks. Ibexes have very hard feet, so they can walk on rocks all day long. Some even live in snowy mountains, where it’s very cold. Mostly, they like to stay in the shade of trees in the daytime.

Ibexes are *herbivores*, so they eat only plants. In the daytime, when it is warm, they search for food. They usually eat leaves from trees that grow in their natural habitat. Many ibexes also search for fruit to eat. However, fruit is less common in some of their grazing areas. Although ibexes are plant eaters, this does not mean that they are less dangerous to humans. Ibexes dislike being near humans and will sometimes attack. The main animal that hunts for ibexes is the leopard.

Ibexes live in two different groups. Groups are made up of about ten to twenty ibexes. Males make up one group, and females and babies make up the other. Males fight each other to establish power in their groups and to win females as their mates. The most powerful male ibexes avoid each other and do not fight. This helps them avoid serious injury.

Ibexes are known for their charging abilities when they attack predators. Ibexes put down their heads and butt into their predators. Although younger ibexes often fight, they avoid hurting each other. In fact, much of their fighting involves circling and pretend charges, which are called *mock* charges.

Ibexes used to be the subjects of many game hunts. The handsome male heads were prized by hunters, and many of these heads were stuffed by *taxidermists* and then displayed in the homes of big game hunters. They were also hunted because of the medicinal properties of various parts of their bodies. However, the advancement of modern medicine has stopped most of the hunting of ibexes for their medicinal value. About ten thousand ibexes still live today in the world.

Interpret



(1) Why might the fur get darker as the weather warms?

Re-think



(2) How would hard feet be helpful for walking on rocks?

Connect



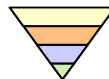
(3) Why might fruit be hard to find in the ibex habitat?

Predict



(4) Why do ibexes separate into two groups?

Summarize



(5) Summarize why ibexes were hunted so often.



“The Okapi” Comprehension Worksheet #4

The okapi looks like a mix of zebra and giraffe. These animals have dark backs. On their legs, they have white stripes. These stripes make them look like zebras. Their bodies look like small giraffes. But, they do not have very long necks. Their ears are big and pointy, and their tongues are long, too. Okapis have short horns that are covered by skin.

These animals like to live in large areas away from towns. They can be found only in the middle of Africa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most okapi live in the mountains and forests. They leave scents to mark their territories. Males protect their land, but they allow females to walk through it to find food.

Okapi are strange eaters. They are *herbivores*, so they eat tree leaves, grass, and fungi. But, they also have been known to eat charcoal from burnt trees! Also, they commonly eat red clay from the ground near streams or rivers. Along with plants, charcoal, and clay, they eat fruit and berries. Okapi spend most of their day eating and searching for food. When they find food, they chew it, spit it out, and chew it again. This helps their weak **digestive** system.

Female okapi give birth to a single baby, called a calf. Babies are fed by their mothers and they grow quickly. Only thirty minutes after they are born, okapi can stand up and walk around. Mothers leave their babies during the day. They return at night to feed them. In zoos, okapi live for about thirty years. But, no one knows how long they live in the wild.

Although they generally live alone, Okapi have ways of communicating with each other. They make different sounds that zoologists are able to identify. One sound, called a *chuff*, is made when one okapi meets another. The *bleat* is used when an okapi calf is separated from its mother and put into danger.

The forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are threatened by people eager for their rich natural resources. As a result, okapi are losing their territory. Okapi are not only threatened by loggers, miners, and farmers, but they are also threatened by illegal hunters, called *poachers*, who hunt them for their valuable skins. The okapi population is currently **classified** as “near threatened” by extinction.

Predict



(1) From their description, do okapi seem like they would be predators?

Connect



(2) How do the okapi eating habits explain why they like to live in large areas away from towns?

Interpret



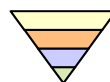
(3) Why don't scientists know how long they live in the wild?

Re-think



(4) What other types of communication would be important?

Summarize



(5) Summarize the reasons the okapi is threatened.

“The Mule” Comprehension Worksheet #5

Mules are babies, born from donkey and horse parents. They have short, thick heads. They have long pointy ears. Mules have a short mane, like most horses. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some mules can grow to weigh as much as six humans! Mules have small, strong hooves.

Most of the mules in the world are in China. In that country, mules are used for riding. Mules are also used for pulling carts. Many other mules are found in Mexico, South America, and North Africa. Mules live mostly on farms with people. There are only a few wild mules and many of these animals live in California. They were lost during the California Gold Rush of the 1850s and have survived in foothill canyons ever since.

The mule’s owner can purchase food for mules at any farm store. Mules have the same diets as horses and donkeys. However, they need less protein than horses. Their favorite snacks are hay or other dried grasses. Mules need lots of fresh, clean water. But, if they drink too much, they can have serious problems. Mule owners need to control their food and drink levels.

Since mules come from two different parent animals, they are called **hybrids**. Most mules are sterile. This means that they cannot produce any babies. But, some mules have been able to have babies. Mule babies are called *foals*. If a female mule and a male horse are the parents, then the foal is mostly horse-like. A male donkey produces a mostly donkey-like foal.

Mules are intelligent animals. They can endure hardship and severe conditions, which is why they are commonly used for transportation and farm work. Mules are **stubborn** if treated harshly. Horses will forgive their owners for treating them poorly, but mules generally will not. Mules are very proud animals. When treated well by their owners, mules are usually very friendly. They will bond and work well with people who treat them **decently**.

The number of mules in the world is increasing. Endangered animal agencies have rated the mule of “no concern” for extinction. In China, where there is the densest population, mules are still bred daily. The mule population is even increasing in industrialized nations.

Predict



(1) What advantages might the mix of donkey and horse produce?

Interpret



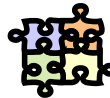
(2) Why are most of the mules found in those areas?

Re-think



(3) How would mule owners need to plan ahead for additional mules?

Connect



(4) Why do mules respond as they do to the different ways in which they are treated?

Summarize



(5) Summarize the status of the overall world population of mules.

“The Rooster” Comprehension Worksheet #6

Roosters are male chickens. There are many types of roosters. They come in a variety of colors: brown, white, black, and red. Roosters have red combs on the top of their heads. They have yellow beaks. They have black feathers on their tails. Below their eyes, roosters have a white spot. Their thin legs and feet are gray or black.

Most roosters live on farms. In fact, chickens live in all areas of the world. But, most of them live in China and the United States. Most chicken owners keep their chickens in *coops*. A coop is a walled or screened shack designed for chickens. Coops keep roosters warm during the winter and cool in the summertime. Female chickens, called *hens*, even have built-in nesting spots in many coops.

Most roosters are fed by their owners. Their diet is made up of insects, worms, slugs, and snails. However, they also eat plants, fruit, seeds, acorns, and other foods. Roosters can find their own food if the owner wishes. But, they must have a lot of room to search for their food.

Farmers chiefly keep chickens for their eggs, however, some chicken farmers raise hens and roosters for their meat. The job of the rooster is to protect the nest and the hens. Usually, there is one rooster who is in charge of a group of other roosters and hens. The head rooster wins this position through fighting or pretend-fighting.

Throughout history, roosters have been used in “cock fights.” People organize fights between roosters and bet on the winner. Roosters that are used in cock fights are specially **bred** and trained for strength. Although cock fighting is a traditional sporting event in nearly every part of the world, most Americans considered it to be animal cruelty. In fact, cock fighting is illegal in forty-nine states in the United States. Some community and state laws allow **sentencing** for up to three years in prison for those convicted of this crime. World-wide, thousands of birds are killed or hurt every year in cock fights.

Roosters are domesticated animals. They have no threat of extinction. The number of chickens worldwide continues to increase. In fact, chickens are the world’s largest group of **domesticated** birds. With a population of over eight billion, there are more chickens than humans on earth!

Interpret



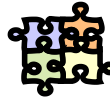
(1) Why are coops important to raising chickens?

Re-think



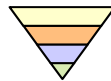
(2) Why would roosters that feed themselves need a lot of room?

Connect



(3) What other animals fight for leadership of their group?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the arguments of those opposed to cock fighting.

Predict



(5) Predict what will happen in the future to the world population of chickens.



“The Woodpecker” Comprehension Worksheet #7

Woodpeckers are some of the loudest birds around. Not all woodpeckers look the same. Most have two toes on the front of their feet and two on the back. Their tongues are long enough to curl all the way around their heads. Woodpeckers have strong pointed beaks. Their bottom tail feathers are strong and stiff. Most woodpeckers weigh only about one pound.

These birds can be found all over the world. They live in wooded areas everywhere but in Australia. Their homes are often made in the tops of trees in forests. Most woodpeckers will make holes in trees with their beaks to build their nests. Some will find holes and use them. Different types of woodpeckers like different trees. But, many woodpeckers prefer cypress trees and redwoods.

A woodpecker’s daily diet consists of different foods depending on the type of woodpecker. Common foods include insects, fruits, and nuts. Like many birds, woodpeckers enjoy eating worms. Woodpeckers are mainly *omnivores*. They use their beaks to hit bark on trees to expose bugs (ants and beetles, usually) which they then eat. Some woodpeckers have been found to eat sap from trees. Others eat mostly acorns.

Female woodpeckers produce about four babies each season. Males and females work together to dig holes out of trees to provide a nest for their babies. Babies remain in their eggs for about two weeks until they hatch. When they hatch, they are blind and do not have any feathers. One parent goes out and finds food to bring back to the nest, while the other stays behind to protect the eggs. Babies usually leave the nest after about thirty days.

Woodpeckers are known for their **repetitive** tapping on tree trunks to **expose** insects from tree bark. Some species tap on trees to communicate or attract other woodpeckers. Woodpeckers can tap more than ten thousand times a day! They are usually not very protective of their territory.

The population of woodpeckers is generally not considered to be threatened, but their **habitat** in some areas has been reduced due to woodcutting and deforestation. Two species of these birds are considered officially endangered by the government. Still, the overall woodpecker population is balanced.

Interpret



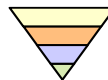
(1) Why aren't woodpeckers found in Australia?

Re-think



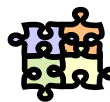
(2) How do the physical features of woodpeckers help them get the foods they eat?

Summarize



(3) Summarize the relationship between the male and female woodpecker.

Connect



(4) Why are woodpeckers considered to be some of the loudest birds on earth?

Predict



(5) Why would many think that woodpeckers are pests?



“The Cow” Comprehension Worksheet #8

Cows have many uses. Farmers raise cows for different reasons. Some raise cows for their meat. Others raise cows for their dairy products. Cows come in many different colors. Cows can be brown, white, or black. Male cows are called *bulls*, and they have horns. Female cows are gentle. Bulls can be mean and dangerous.

Almost every place in the world has cows. Cows live in grassy **meadows** or on farms. There are some wild cows left in the world. These wild cows are in Midwestern America, India, and Africa. Wild cows are not the same as farm cows. Still, most cows live on farms, not in the wild.

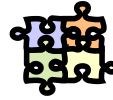
Cows on farms are fed based on their use. Beef cows are fed differently from dairy cows. A beef cow is fed corn, grain, and grasses. Farmers feed these cows a large amount of protein. Dairy cows need large amounts of fiber. Dairy cows provide milk and cream. Cows have very large stomachs that are divided into four parts. Each part has a different job in **digesting** food. Usually, only older cows are used to make clothes. Their *hides* (the outer layers of cow skins) are dried into leather.

Baby cows are called *calves*. Some calves die at birth, because they are so large. Older cows have less problems giving birth than do young cows. Calves are nursed by their mothers for about ninety days. Adult cows like to stay in groups with each other. Bulls usually stay by themselves.

Cows require a lot of care from farmers. Cow hooves have to be trimmed by farmers once or twice each year. The hair at the end of a cow's tail (called the *switch*) must be frequently cleaned and trimmed. In the winter, cows are kept inside at night to protect them from the cold in most climates. Additionally, cows require a lot of fresh hay on which to sleep. They spend 40-50% of their day lying down. Cows take several naps throughout the day.

In India, most people follow the religion of Hinduism. Hindus believe that cows are **sacred** animals. Hindus do not eat them and cows are free to roam about the countryside. Worldwide, cows are certainly not endangered animals. There are over 1.3 billion cows still in the world today. That number is almost equal to one cow for every six people on earth.

Connect



(1) What other animals have mean or dangerous males?

Interpret



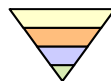
(2) Why are there few wild cows left in the world?

Re-think



(3) Why would only older cows be used for their hides?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the difficulties in raising cows.

Predict



(5) Why are cows not likely to become endangered animals?

“The Koi” Comprehension Worksheet #9

Koi fish are freshwater fishes and are kept by many as pets. Koi come in many different colors. Most of them are orange. Koi have eyes on both sides of their heads. Behind their eyes, they have gills. These gills help them breathe under water. On their backs, they have a fin.

The koi fish are related to carps. Carps come from the Caspian Sea in Europe. Colored koi fish were first discovered in Japan. Today, they live everywhere in the world. They are mostly kept as pets, but some have been **released** into the wild. People like keeping koi because of their bright colors. Many people have built koi ponds to enjoy these fish.

Koi will eat many different foods if they are available. Koi owners usually feed them fish food from the store. However, they may feed their fish with some live foods. These foods include worms, prawns, tadpoles, and frogs. Some live foods, like insects, are dangerous for koi to eat. Owners can also feed their koi fish brown bread and lettuce. But, owners need to be careful because there are foods that they can't digest.

Sometimes, male koi will bully females. If this happens, an owner must separate the two. After the babies, called *fry*, are born, they will find a place to hide. After two or three days of growing, the newborn koi fish will start swimming up to the surface of the water. The fry need to be fed and treated differently by their owner to help their growth.

Koi require a constant, good **filtration** system for the water in which they swim and live. Adding simple tap water to their habitat could even kill the fish. Tap water is filled with chlorine and other chemicals that may have negative effects on koi fish. Koi habitats must have water that has the right **texture** (hardness or softness), temperature, sunshine, and chemicals. It is recommended that new koi owners read information about creating a home for their fishes before bringing their fish home.

Since koi are domesticated water animals, they are not threatened by extinction. The population of koi in the world is increasing steadily as the demand for these beautiful colored fishes grows. Humans have destroyed some koi that have been released into the wild, because they pollute the water around them, making it undrinkable for livestock. However, large amounts of money have been spent to try to destroy these wild populations of koi, and those operations have been largely unsuccessful.

Interpret



(1) Why are koi fish popular as pets?

Predict



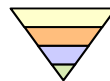
(2) What problems might result by releasing koi fish into the wild?

Re-think



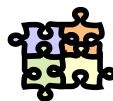
(3) What special equipment would be necessary to raise both male and female koi?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the special care that pet koi require.

Connect



(5) What other animals have a negative impact on a habitat?

“The Hawk” Comprehension Worksheet #10

The hawk is a large, powerful bird. One type of hawk is the red-tailed hawk. These birds are mostly brown in color. Their feathers have two different colors: light and dark brown. Red-tailed hawks are known for their bright red tails. They are slightly larger than common house cats. Their claws are called *talons*. They are very sharp.

Red-tailed hawks fly all over the world. Most of them live in North and South America. These hawks like to live in many different places. Some live in forests and some in fields. They live in deserts and cities, too. Red-tailed hawks are often seen on telephone poles. Where there are trees, there are also red-tailed hawks.

These hawks are birds of prey. That means that they usually hunt for food while flying. They do not have three meals a day. They mostly feed on small animals. They like rabbits, snakes, and rats. But, they also eat fish and other birds. When hunting, they fly high in the air and look down. As soon as they see food, they **swoop** down quickly and grab it with their talons.

Red-tailed hawks can have babies when they are two years old. They have partners that they stay with for many years. When a partner dies, the hawk will seek a new one. Hawks remain in the same nest for many years. Each spring, female red-tailed hawks lay one to three eggs. They protect these eggs from owls and other birds.

Humans have often used red-tailed hawks in **falconry**—the sport of using birds to hunt game. Hunters have trained these hawks to track down game such as squirrels, rabbits, and ducks. And, they have even been trained to work with dogs in hunting. When a hawk catches its prey, the trainer will then locate the bird and trade its catch for a piece of ready-to-eat meat. There are very few falconers today. It can be a very dangerous sport.

In the United States alone, there are about one million red-tailed hawks. Animal rights activists state that the number of hawks has decreased due to **deforestation**—the cutting down of forests. However, as more national parks have opened, the hawk population has risen greatly. Red-tailed hawks are not main targets of bird-hunters, even though the hawks have been known to hunt small farm animals.

Predict



(1) From the description, what might the red-tail hawks eat?

Interpret



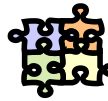
(2) Why do red-tailed hawks like to sit on high places?

Re-think



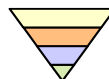
(3) How is the element of surprise the red-tail hawk’s greatest hunting strategy?

Connect



(4) What other animals are used to hunt?

Summarize



(5) Summarize the current status of the red-tail hawk population.

“The Ermine” Comprehension Worksheet #11

The ermine is also called the short-tailed weasel. Ermines weigh less than one pound. In the summer, their coats are brown. Their stomachs are white. But, when it turns cold, their coats turn white. Ermines have long necks and bodies, but short legs. Their heads are shaped like triangles with two pink ears.

Ermines live in Canada, Alaska, Europe, and Asia. They like to live in cold places. Ermines find rocks to live by. They make lots of homes in between the rocks. In fall, ermines shed their brown coats. Their white coats let them match the snow in the winter. If they cannot be seen, they cannot be eaten!

Ermines are *carnivores*. Mostly, they eat rabbits. With their sharp teeth, they are able to catch prey much bigger than themselves. But, they also like to eat rodents and small insects. During wintertime, ermines will use their sharp claws to dig under snow. Under the snow, they can often find food to eat. They also use their claws for burying their food.

Male ermines become adults at one year of age. Females become adults much faster, at only two months of age. Females have ten to thirteen babies every year. Baby ermines weigh only about as much as a coin! At eight weeks of age, the mother teaches them how to hunt. After that, females leave their mothers. Males stay with their mothers until the next spring. Males never help raise any of the babies. Ermines live for about four to seven years. They live, eat, and hunt on their own. However, they sometimes communicate with each other through *scents*. Ermines have an excellent sense of smell.

In colonial history, ermines were once used as furs for coats. The Kings and Queens of England often wore ermine on their robes. The ermine was known as a symbol of purity in Europe because of its bright white color. Ermine fur was only harvested in the winter, when the ermine was totally white and had shed its brown coat from summer. Even today, in some areas of Japan, the ermine is considered a symbol of good luck, because of its friendly appearance.

Today, ermine fur is still popular. In some countries, an ermine coat is just as **prized** as is a mink coat. Ermines are not close to extinction. The Endangered Species List rates them as “not a concern.” In fact, they spread quite quickly and ermines are even overpopulated in parts of Europe.

Predict



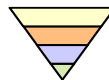
(1) Why might the ermine coats turn white in the winter?

Connect



(2) What other animals hunt for prey larger than themselves?

Summarize



(3) Summarize the ermine family relationships.

Interpret



(4) Why does the white fur of the ermine symbolize purity?

Re-think



(5) Why are ermine coats so expensive, when there are so many of these animals?

“The Armadillo” Comprehension Worksheet #12

Armadillos are made to dig. They have short, strong legs. These legs are good for finding food. Most armadillos have bony plates on their tails. Armadillos also have shells on their backs. They are mostly brown, and they have short pointy ears.

Armadillos are about the same length as common house cats. Armadillos live all over America. They mostly live near rivers or lakes. They like to dig holes for their homes. Armadillos often stay in the shade under trees. But, they also like to stay under the homes of people. Some armadillos will make their home underneath your house or in your backyard.

Armadillos are *omnivores*, since they do eat some dead birds. However, they mostly eat plants and bugs, instead of meat. Their diet consists mainly of ants, beetles, and worms. They do not have very sharp teeth, so most of what they eat must be very easy to chew. Armadillos do have sharp claws, and they dig for bugs. Also, they use these claws to tear apart rotten wood to search for ants. Armadillos can eat up to 40,000 ants in one meal!

Female armadillos give birth to their babies in nests. These nests are usually dug into the ground for protection. Once per year, female armadillos get pregnant and lay just one egg. From this egg hatches four baby armadillos. All the babies look the same. These armadillos will usually live to be ten to fifteen years old. Most of the time, armadillos like to live by themselves. Sometimes, they will meet to find food. Armadillos call out to each other with grunting noises.

Armadillos like to swim, and they are quite talented at it. They usually use their arms and legs to dog **paddle** through lakes or streams. Armadillos can also go underwater, if they want. They can hold their breath for four to six minutes at a time. And, because their heavy shell makes it hard for them to float, they breathe air into their bodies to stay afloat, just like **inflating** a raft.

Unfortunately, most species of armadillos are endangered. Only one species seems to be increasing in number—the *nine-banded armadillo*. Many armadillos are dying off because of people. As people **populate** more and more land, armadillos are losing their natural habitats. Also, the pets that people bring with them to live in the armadillo habitats present problems. Sometimes dogs have been known to kill these interesting creatures. Still, there are many nine-banded armadillos left in the world.

Re-think



(1) Why do many people consider armadillos to be pests?

Summarize



(2) Summarize the importance of the armadillo claws.

Predict



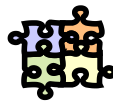
(3) Predict when armadillos might “call out to each other.”

Interpret



(4) Why might their swimming ability be important for these animals?

Connect



(5) How does increasing human population affect the habitats of other animals?

“The Orca” Comprehension Worksheet #13

The orca is also called the *killer whale*. An orca is a black and white dolphin. Orcas have white chests and sides. They also have white spots above their eyes. The rest of the body is black. Each orca has a large fin on its back. Orcas are very large. One killer whale can be as long as two cars! Their great size makes them very strong.

Killer whales can be found all over the world. In fact, killer whales live in all five oceans. They also live in some seas. Orcas like cold water more than warm water. They have even been known to swim under ice! Each season, orcas swim to different places. But, every year, they come back to the same places during summer.

Orcas are known as the “wolves of the sea.” They are called *wolves*, because they hunt in packs. A killer whale’s diet is mainly made up of large salmon. But, orcas have been known to eat other water animals too. Some of their prey includes tuna, sharks, octopuses, and reptiles. Rarely, orcas will eat mammals. They have also been known to eat seals, sea lions, and other whales. Some have even been seen eating blue whales, which are the largest animals on earth. Orcas eat up to 500 pounds of food each day!

At fifteen years of age, female orcas become adults. Mothers have a single baby, called a *calf*, once every five years. Nearly half of all newborn calves die before turning one year old. Orcas live in large groups called *pods*. These groups each have their own language, which is different than that of other **pods**. Orca speech sounds like loud screaming. Killer whales hunt with their groups and share food with each other. Pods of orcas have been known to travel with each other during hunting.

Throughout history, commercial whaling—the business of killing whales for food, blubber, and oil—has been common. This whaling has reduced the orca population significantly. Additionally, orcas have been shot or even bombed by some governments, because orcas are such good hunters that they compete with **commercial** fishermen and reduce the supply of fish to catch.

The intelligence, trainability, and beauty of orcas have made them popular attractions at many zoos and wildlife exhibits. Orcas are not listed as endangered or threatened, although, numbers have **declined** in some parts of the world. The orca population especially thrives in the Antarctic ocean.

Re-think



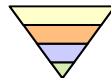
(1) Why do the orcas swim so far?

Connect



(2) What other animals hunt in packs?

Summarize



(3) Summarize the pod and family relationships of the orca.

Interpret



(4) Why don’t governments support the orcas, rather than fishermen?

Predict



(5) Predict the future of orcas in zoos and in the wild.

“The Anteater” Comprehension Worksheet #14

The anteater is a strange looking animal. A giant anteater’s body is very long. It is about as long as a person’s body. Giant anteaters have long, rough hair and a dark, bushy tail. Some giant anteaters are brown, while others are gray. All giant anteaters have a black stripe. They also have a very long tongue, which they use to catch bugs to eat.

Giant anteaters live in grasslands and rain forests. They are mostly from South America. They also live in North America, too. They find their food in wet forest areas. They spend the whole day searching for food. They make their home in a hole at the bottom of a tree or in a **hollow** log. Giant anteaters can live near people or away from them.

Searching on the ground or in logs, giant anteaters find and eat a variety of insects. Their favorite foods are ants and termites. Giant anteaters can eat thousands of insects in just a few minutes! These anteaters can smell their food from far away. Since they do not have any teeth, they use rocks in their mouths to break down their food. Giant anteaters have sticky tongues that allow them to pick up many insects at once. They do not destroy the insects’ habitat so that they can come back again another time.

In the autumn season, giant anteaters find mates. After about six months, baby anteaters are born. Giant anteaters only have one baby at a time. For the first year of their lives, baby giant anteaters will ride on their mothers’ backs. Then, after a few months, baby anteaters will start leaving their mothers for short trips. **Eventually**, after about two years, they will leave their mothers and live on their own.

Some anteaters are active in the day while sleeping at night, but others are just the opposite. They are light sleepers and they will wake up at the slightest sound around them. They protect themselves from predators with their powerful claws. One of their worst predators is the jaguar.

Humans are by far the biggest threat to the wild giant anteater population. As humans continue to expand their habitat by destroying forests and constructing buildings, the giant anteater population decreases. They are considered **vulnerable** to extinction.

Predict



(1) Why do anteaters have to spend so much time looking for food?

Re-think



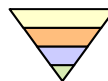
(2) How would rocks help break down food?

Interpret



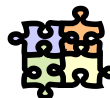
(3) Why do people allow anteaters to live in their habitats?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the mother-baby relationship of anteaters.

Connect



(5) What other animals’ wet forest habitats have been threatened by humans?

“The Elephant” Comprehension Worksheet #15

Elephants are the biggest land animals. They have huge trunks. They use these to eat and drink. Under an elephant’s trunk are tusks. **Tusks** look like big, white bananas. They help elephants dig and fight. An elephant’s skin is mostly gray or brown. They have large floppy ears on the sides of their heads.

Elephants live in Africa and Asia. African elephants have large ears, while Indian elephants have small ears. Elephants live in places with a lot of grasses, trees, and shrubs. They also live by ponds and lakes. Sometimes they walk for miles to find food and water. Many elephants live in zoos throughout the world.

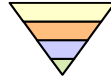
Elephants are *herbivores*. They spend about sixteen hours every day finding food! Most of their diet is made up of grasses. Other foods include leaves, bamboo, twigs, and fruit. They even eat flowers. Elephants use their trunks to pull food from trees or from the ground. They can eat up to 300 pounds of food in just one day! They usually drink water once or twice a day, but some elephants will even go three days before taking a drink.

Elephant family groups are made up of females and their babies. The babies are called *calves*. The family groups are called *herds* and can be as small as three or four or as large as twenty-five. Females without babies usually follow mother elephants and help them. This prepares the females to be good mothers. Young males leave the herd between ages ten and thirteen. Older females in the herd protect young calves from other animals.

Elephants are some of the most intelligent land animals. In fact, they have the largest brains of any living animal in the world, even whales. According to researchers, elephants are able to express human-like feelings, such as compassion and grief. Elephants are very similar to humans. They are the only animals known to have a *ceremony* when a fellow elephant dies. When an elephant is hurt, others will band together to help it. Elephants also have excellent memories and they have even been known to use plants to heal themselves.

Since the beginning of time, elephants have been threatened by humans. Alexander the Great and Hannibal used them in war to defeat their enemies. In recent years, elephants have been illegally hunted for their ivory tusks. The elephant population is officially endangered. There are only about half of a million left in the world today.

Summarize



(1) Summarize where elephants live.

Interpret



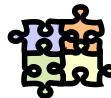
(2) Why would elephants have to walk for miles to find food and water?

Re-think



(3) How do males relate to the herd?

Connect



(4) What human-like characteristics do elephants have?

Predict



(5) How will the elephants respond to increasing human population and deforestation?

“The Iguana” Comprehension Worksheet #16

Iguanas are types of lizards. They are about five feet long with their tails. These animals are green or grayish-green. Their skin is rough. They have plenty of bumps on their backs. Green iguanas have long fingers and claws to help them climb. These animals look heavy, but they are not. They are quite fast. Their teeth are sharp and strong.

These iguanas are mainly from South America. But, they also can be found in Mexico and Florida. They usually live near water, and they often climb in trees. They can fall from the top of a very tall tree and land without being hurt. Green iguanas use their claws to hook onto trees.

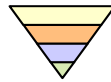
Green iguanas are mainly *herbivores*. They feed on flowers, leaves, and fruits. The plum is one of the favorite foods of the green iguana. Although green iguanas mainly eat plants, they also have been seen eating mice, dead fish, and insects. Some wild green iguanas have even been known to eat bird eggs. Baby iguanas have a different diet than full-grown iguanas.

Iguanas usually prefer to live alone. However, they can be found living in groups in sunny areas. Green iguanas lay about fifty eggs at a time. They lay all their eggs in a hole they dig in the ground called a *burrow*. Sometimes, they dig more **burrows** than they use to trick animals that may want to eat their eggs. After a female iguana lays her eggs, she never returns to the hole. The eggs hatch by themselves, and the babies will grow up without parents. Only about five iguanas survive each batch of eggs.

Many people in the United States and Mexico want to have iguanas for pets, but iguanas are difficult to keep and care for. These animals are considered to be *exotic* pets, because they are unusual and require special treatment. Because of increasing demand, hunting for iguanas can be very profitable, though some states **prohibit** iguana hunting altogether. Now, more and more iguanas are being raised on iguana farms to sell as pets.

In South America, some people have other uses for iguanas. These people, mostly living in remote rainforest locations, actually eat green iguanas. Those that eat these lizards refer to iguanas as “bamboo chickens” or “chickens of the trees.” However, iguanas are not part of the normal diet in most South American households. The overall green iguana population is healthy and in balance.

Summarize



(1) Summarize the appearance of iguanas.

Connect



(2) What other animals are good tree climbers?

Re-think



(3) Why might only five out of fifty iguana eggs survive?

Predict



(4) Why would iguanas be difficult to care for?

Interpret



(5) Why are iguana farms increasing in number?

“The Otter” Comprehension Worksheet #17

The otter lives on land and in fresh or saltwater. Otters have long, slim bodies. Their arms and legs are very short. Most otters have sharp claws on their feet. Their tails are strong and long. They have two layers of fur. The top layer is hard and thick. Under that is a softer, thinner layer. This fur keeps otters warm, even in cold water. Otters have a lot of hair, making their fur very dense.

There are thirteen different types of otters in the world. They live almost everywhere. Otters live by rivers, creeks, seas, and oceans. Some even live in swamps! Fresh water otters spend most of their time on land. They use small holes in trees or rocks for homes. But, sea otters do not go on land very much. Sea otters use plants to sleep on when they are in the water.

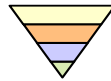
Otters eat mostly fish. However, they also eat lobsters, clams, shrimp, and mice. Some otters have become experts at opening clams and shellfish. Rarely, otters will eat small land animals or birds. Otters are very active hunters. The normal otter will hunt for about three to four hours a day. Nursing mothers will hunt up to eight hours a day! Many otters will catch their food using their teeth, but some use their claws.

Most otters start having babies at about five years of age. But, otters in Africa can start having babies at just one year old! Most otters are pregnant for about two months, except sea otters. For sea otters, pregnancy lasts about six months. Otters have babies each year. Otters **ferociously** defend their babies against any attacks. Female otters feed their babies for about six months before the babies begin to hunt for themselves.

Otters use their mouths to produce sounds and communicate with each other. Giant otters are the loudest of all the **species**. Researchers have identified a wide variety of otter calls. Otters also communicate by scent. At the bottom of their tails, they have openings that send out their scent.

Although there are still many otters, they are generally considered as vulnerable to extinction. Many zoo parks have rescued and **rehabilitated** otters, especially sea otters. Efforts to reintroduce otters into the wild in Alaska, Washington, and California have been very successful. Still, the otter population remains threatened by fish shortages, human destruction of habitat, and water pollution.

Summarize



(1) Summarize the variety within the otter species.

Rethink



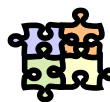
(2) Why would nursing mothers have to hunt more?

Interpret



(3) What is the relationship between mother and baby otters.

Connect



(4) What other animals have similar communication techniques as otters?

Predict



(5) What will happen to the otter?



“The Umbrella Bird” Comprehension Worksheet #18

The umbrella bird does not carry an umbrella. It does live in the rainforests. This bird gets its name from its head feathers. These feathers face forward and cover its face like an umbrella. Umbrella birds are about twelve to eighteen inches long.

They also have a long piece of skin called a **wattle** that hangs down from their necks. Turkeys have wattles like these. But, umbrella birds have even bigger ones. Some of these wattles are as long as the birds. It’s amazing that the birds do not lose their balance when standing on tree branches. The wattles help them chirp very loudly. In fact, umbrella birds are some of the noisiest birds in the rainforests.

Most umbrella birds live in Central America and in the northern areas of South America. They stay in the mountains when they are having babies. They live in the tropical rainforest lowlands the rest of the time. They make their homes in the tallest trees. This is where most of the sunlight is found.

Umbrella birds are *omnivores*, so they eat both meat and plants. Umbrella birds move up and down the trees of the rainforest looking for prey. Once they find an animal or large insect, they grab it with their beaks. Then, they knock it out by slamming it against a tree branch. Finally, they eat it. Umbrella birds will eat frogs, lizards, and small rodents. They also like to eat fruit.

Males look for female mates in an interesting way. They sit up in a tree all day long. While they sit, they use their wattles to make a loud sound. It sounds like someone banging on a big metal trash can. The females can hear this sound throughout the forest. If they are looking for a mate, they can follow the sound to where the males are sitting. Then, the female picks which male it likes best.

Umbrella birds are in danger of extinction because their habitats are **rapidly diminishing**. Forests are being quickly cleared out in Central America and in northern South America to plant crops or graze livestock. The actions that people take to expand farmland or get more grazing land affect other animals and their habitats. It would certainly be a shame to lose these interesting umbrella birds.

Re-think



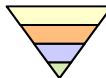
(1) Why would one think that umbrella birds could lose their balance?

Interpret



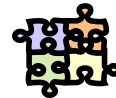
(2) Why would umbrella birds move to the mountains to have babies?

Summarize



(3) Summarize the hunting techniques of the umbrella bird?

Connect



(4) What other animal species have the female that picks the male?

Predict



(5) How will the growing deforestation affect the umbrella bird population?



“The Bear” Comprehension Worksheet #19

Bears are some of the most powerful wild animals. Different bears have different colors of fur. Brown bears can have brown, blonde, and black fur. Their tails are about as long as their heads. Bears are very strong. Some bears are big, and some are small. Male bears are bigger than females.

There are few brown bears left in the world. They mainly live in Russia and in the United States. Brown bears used to live all over, but they were killed where humans settled. Brown bears like to live in the open country where there are mountains. Others like to live in forests. Bears build *dens* in which to sleep. Dens are large holes that bears dig under trees or sometimes on the sides of hills.

Brown bears are *omnivores*. They eat a variety of different plants and meats. They mainly like to eat leaves, berries, roots, fungi, and sprouts. But they also eat fish, insects, and small mammals like raccoons. Brown bears in Yellowstone have been known to eat up to 40,000 moths in one day! Occasionally, these bears will eat deer or moose. They have been known to break into cars and homes to get food as well.

Over the summer months, brown bears look for other brown bears for mates. They remain with the same mates from several days to a few weeks. Males compete with other males for their partners. Each year, females have about one to four babies, called *cubs*. Cubs are born blind, without teeth, and without hair. They remain with their mothers for two to four years and learn how to hunt, fish, and defend themselves.

The California State Flag features a large type of brown bear called a *grizzly*. Although, since the early 1900s, grizzly bears have been extinct in California. Grizzly bears were wiped out by organized hunting, sponsored and paid for by the California state government, because these bears were such a threat to humans and livestock. The grizzly habitat did not mix well with the human habitat.

While the brown bear is not a main concern on the endangered species list, some sub-species of the brown bear are threatened. Specifically, the grizzly bear is facing endangerment. Some organizations want to **reintroduce** the bears to their **previous** habitats in the Western United States. One of the largest grizzly **reserves** in the world is Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.

Predict



(1) Why would people kill brown bears?

Summarize



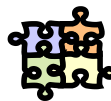
(2) Summarize the brown bear's diet.

Re-think



(3) How do mother bears train their cubs?

Connect



(4) What other animals do not mix well with the human habitat?

Interpret



(5) How would the grizzly bear mix with the human habitat if reintroduced today?



“The Camel” Comprehension Worksheet #20

The camel is a special animal. Camels live in some of the driest places on earth. Camels have very long necks and large nostrils. They are most famous for their humps on their backs. Most camels have just one hump, but some have two. They have long, skinny legs and very large feet.

Camels live in the hottest places on earth. Those with one hump mostly live in the deserts of Africa, Arabia, and Australia. Another type of camel with two humps lives only in the Gobi Desert of Asia. Most camels are cared for by human owners. People ride their camels on the hot desert sand. They also use camels to carry things for them. Some people think that camels are mean and kick and spit. This is not true. Camels are very helpful and smart.

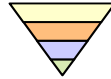
Camels can last an entire week without eating food or drinking water! Camel owners will feed them grass, grains, wheat, and oats. The camels slowly digest their food. They spit it up and chew it again. Although many people think that camels store water in their humps, this is not true. The humps are made of fatty tissue and this does help camels last longer between meals.

These animals generally live for about thirty to forty years. When females are about five years of age, they are ready to have babies. Females are pregnant for about thirteen months before having their babies. They usually have one baby, but can have twins.

Throughout history, camels have been used in warfare because camels can walk lengthy distances without growing tired. The first recorded use of camels in battle was in 547 B.C. when Cyrus the Great of Persia rode camels into battle. But, camels were not only used in the **military** during the ancient times. In the mid-nineteenth century, the United States rode camels to **patrol** the California-Mexico border. And, recently United Nations peacekeeping troops in Africa have been using camels for transportation.

Most of the world’s camels **currently** are domesticated. However, there are about 900 Bactrian (Asian) camels left in the wild. They live in China and Mongolia where they are threatened by illegal mining, wolves, and hunting. Many efforts to help increase the population of wild Asian camels have been made, but they have met little success.

Summarize

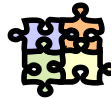


(1) Summarize how people use camels.

Re-think

(2) Why might people think that camels carry water in their humps?

Connect



(3) Compare the terms of pregnancies for camels and humans.

Interpret



(4) Why are camels still practical options for transportation?

Predict



(5) What will happen to the wild camels in the future?

“The Dog” Comprehension Worksheet #21

Dogs are kept as pets everywhere in the world. They are known as “man’s best friends.” Dogs have different sizes, shapes, and colors. Big dogs can be as big as wolves. Small dogs can be as small as house cats. Most dogs have a tail. Some tails are long and straight, while others are curly, short, or twisted.

Different kinds of dogs have different abilities. Humans have used dogs to help rescue people. Dogs also help the police. Dogs even help to guide the blind. They can hunt, herd, and guard. Dogs have very good hearing. They can hear four times as far as people. They can also smell better than most animals, too. Dogs are very useful and helpful to people.

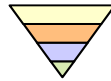
Unlike most *carnivores*, dogs don’t just eat meat. Besides meat, they eat vegetables, grains, eggs, and even milk. Some human food, however, is very dangerous to dogs. Chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins, and some nuts can hurt dogs. Some plants and flowers also can be dangerous to dogs. Dog owners must be very careful not to feed their dogs anything that may be poisonous to their digestive systems.

Dogs have been **featured** in contests and in entertainment. Every year, thousands of dogs compete in dog **agility** championships. Hard-working dogs and their trainers practice for months on obstacle courses. Also, dogs compete in “dog shows.” Dog owners have their dogs judged on beauty, grooming, and performance in **various** challenges. Some dogs, such as Lassie, have been the stars of television shows and movies.

In the United States and some countries, there is a dog overpopulation problem. There are over 73 million dogs in the United States alone. That is almost one dog for every four people! Adult dogs should be spayed or neutered to avoid having unwanted puppies. Lovable dogs can be adopted from many animal shelters at little cost.

Most of the world’s dogs are owned by humans as pets, but there are still some wild packs of dogs in Africa and Asia. Some wild species of dogs, like the African Wild Dog, face some challenges as humans continue to spread into their habitat.

Summarize



(1) Summarize how people use dogs.

Reflect



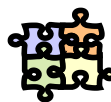
(2) How do dog owners need to be careful in raising their dogs?

Interpret



(3) Why are dogs especially suited to entertain people?

Connect



(4) What other pets have similar overpopulation problems?

Predict



(5) Predict what challenges wild dogs will face in the future.

“The Fox” Comprehension Worksheet #22

There are over twenty types of foxes in the wild. Red foxes are one type of fox. They have black ears and feet. Their tails are bushy and white at the tip. Some red foxes are not red, but most of them are. Red foxes can see, smell, and hear better than humans. Even though they have short legs, they can run very fast. In winter, red foxes grow extra fur to help keep them warm.

Red foxes are found in many different places. They can be found in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. They mostly live in open grassy areas. Red foxes try to hide from humans as much as they can. Some red foxes live in forests. Wherever they live, red foxes each have their own territories. There, they can raise their families and make homes for their babies.

Foxes are *omnivores*. Their diet ranges from small mammals to birds and fruit. Red foxes’ favorite foods are rodents. They like to eat small mice and rats. Once they find their prey, it is hard for their prey to escape. Red foxes are too fast for most of their victims. Sometimes, red foxes will even eat leftover food from humans like orange or banana peels. Red foxes hunt alone. Once they find food, they do not share it.

Female red foxes will have about five to six babies. The babies are called *cubs*. Cubs are born blind. The red foxes make special homes for their babies called *dens*. Red foxes help their cubs along for the first five weeks of their lives. After the cubs are five weeks old, they leave their dens.

Unlike wolves, red foxes do not form packs. They mainly stay to themselves. Sometimes, territories that are next to each other may **overlap**, but red foxes often fight each other over their territories. Each territory has only one male, his mate (or sometimes mates), and their cubs. Throughout their territory, red fox families build **multiple** dens. Often, they will take over other animals’ dens. The same dens are used by each generation of foxes. Red foxes stay in their home territories for life.

The most **significant** predators of foxes are humans, coyotes, and wolves. Humans kill red foxes for their furs. Red foxes are important to the ecosystems in their habitats, because they control the rodent and rabbit populations. Although the red fox population may soon decrease due to overhunting in their habitats, as of now red foxes are not in danger of extinction.

Predict



(1) Would foxes be animals that hunters would wish to hunt?

Re-think



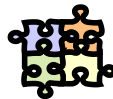
(2) Explain how red foxes are very independent.

Interpret



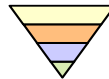
(3) What makes foxes such good hunters?

Connect



(4) What other animals are as territorial as foxes?

Summarize



(5) Summarize the predicted future of the fox population.

“The Goose” Comprehension Worksheet #23

The goose is a medium to large bird. The plural of *goose* is *geese*. There are many kinds of geese in the world. One kind is the Canadian goose. Canadian geese are beautiful birds. They have gray bodies with white chests and chins. Their heads and necks are black.

Canadian geese like to live close to water. Sometimes they move from one place to another. When they decide to move, they fly together. They fly in a V-shape called a **wedge**. On long flights, the birds change places. They do this because the birds in front get tired from flying into the wind. It’s easier to fly at the rear of the wedge. When they fly, the geese like to honk loudly.

Canadian geese eat a lot of grass. When they eat, they grab the grass in their bills and then jerk their heads to tear out the grass. Geese will eat most any plant that grows near water, even seaweed! The geese also eat wheat, rice, and corn. Of course, this means that farmers usually don’t like Canadian geese to visit often.

When geese are two years old, they look for mates. The partners usually stay together all their lives. The female lays about six eggs at a time. Both the mother and the father guard the nest. Lots of animals like to eat their eggs, so they have to watch the eggs carefully. The female has to be especially careful, because she loses some of her feathers before the eggs are hatched, so she can’t fly.

These geese are generally **migratory**. This means that they lay eggs and hatch their chicks in cold climates, but fly south to warmer areas to spend the winter. However, for reasons that scientists don’t fully understand, many Canadian geese are now remaining in the warmer climates all year long. This has created problems for some communities because these geese have permanently settled anywhere where there is water. Golf courses and housing developments with small lakes now have the geese as unwanted guests. These geese can be very messy and because they aggressively defend their territories, they can injure people who come too close.

They used to live only in North America. Now they are in Europe, too. Their numbers are growing due to the fact that many of their natural predators, such as the bald eagle, red fox, and gray wolf are declining. When the balance of animals changes in nature, some animal populations can grow larger than their habitats will allow. This seems to be the case with the **overpopulation** of Canadian geese in some areas.

Re-think



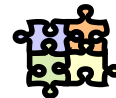
(1) Why would Canadian geese fly in a V-shape wedge?

Interpret



(2) Why don’t farmers want Canadian geese on their farms?

Connect



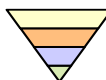
(3) What other animals are changing their habitats and why?

Predict



(4) Why are Canadian geese unwanted guests in these communities?

Summarize



(5) Summarize how an imbalance in nature can overpopulate animal species.

“The Horse” Comprehension Worksheet #24

Horses are some of the most important animals. At the bottom of their four long legs, they have *hooves*. Hooves are like human nails, but stronger and thicker. Horses have long necks and long heads. Their necks have special hair called a *mane*. Their eyes are big, so they can see all around them. Horses come in many different colors.

People ride horses. They ride them to work on cattle ranches. They race them at racetracks. They also ride them for fun. Farmers use them to work on farms. Better fed horses serve their owners best. Horse owners feed their horses freshly cut hay. Some owners feed their horses grains such as corn and oats. Riding or working horses drink a lot of water. They need clean water at all times.

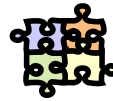
Wild horses, also called *mustangs*, live in the Western United States, Western Canada, and parts of Southern China. Most wild horses live on wide, open grasslands and eat grass, flowers, and other plants. Other wild horses live in forests. In the winter, when grass is not available, they will eat the bark off trees.

Female horses are pregnant for almost a full year. Usually, they have only one baby, called a *foal*, at a time. Horses reach full growth at about four to five years of age. In the wild, horses live in groups under the control of one head male and one head female.

Wild horses are designed to live in rough habitats. They usually have shorter backs, fuller manes, and lower set tails than horses raised on farms. The average horse lives for about twenty years in the wild. Since wolves have been **eliminated** in most areas where wild horses live, wild horses face few predators. Mountain lions are the exception.

In 1978, a new federal law in the United States required that lands be improved to allow the wild horse population to survive. Since then, the wild horse population has seen a steady increase of about 15-20% more than the previous numbers. In addition, since the 1970s, over 175,000 wild horses have been tamed and adopted by people. At this time, the wild horses in the United States and Southern China face no threat of extinction. These beautiful animals continue to **thrive** on the farm, on ranches, in riding stables, and now in the wild.

Connect



(1) What other animals have their eyes set in the same way as horses' eyes?

Summarize



(2) Summarize how horses serve humans.

Re-think



(3) How are mustangs dependent upon the condition of their habitat?

Predict



(4) Predict the future of the wild horse population.

Interpret



(5) How might federal lands have been improved to help wild horses better survive?

“The Jackrabbit” Comprehension Worksheet #25

The jackrabbit is not really a rabbit. It is a *hare*. Jackrabbits don't make good pets. They are wild animals. Rabbits make very good pets. Both do look alike. Usually, jackrabbits are a little larger than rabbits. Jackrabbits are famous for their large, floppy ears. They can be brown or white with some black color. They are covered in fur.

Jackrabbits can move very quickly. They run very fast. They can run up to 45 miles per hour. They also leap very high and far. Their speed and leaping help jackrabbits get away from danger sometimes. Foxes, coyotes, owls, snakes, hawks, and people like to hunt them. They can be a very tasty dinner.

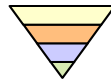
Jackrabbits live most everywhere in the world. They make their homes above ground in simple nests. Rabbits live underground in tunnels called *burrows*. Jackrabbits don't build nests for their babies, but rabbits do build nests. Jackrabbit babies are born with complete fur and with their eyes open, while rabbit babies have no fur and their eyes are closed.

Jackrabbits are *herbivores*. This means that they only eat plants. They especially enjoy lettuce and other vegetables. Jackrabbits can be unwelcome visitors to a vegetable garden because they eat so much. Farmers keep dogs and cats to scare away the jackrabbits. Jackrabbits are most active at night. They look for food when it's dark. During the day, they rest in shady, grassy areas. They keep their long ears flat against their backs and they crouch low to the ground to avoid being seen.

Many cultures have interesting stories and myths about jackrabbits. In some African cultures, jackrabbits are considered to be *tricksters*. This means that people think that these hares are smart trouble-makers that have special powers. Some Africans believe that jackrabbits are bad luck. Americans believe that a rabbit's foot is good luck. From the Arabian culture, *The Tortoise and the Hare* is one of Aesop's most famous **fables**.

In Eastern cultures, jackrabbits play a huge role in literature and myths. The hare is a key animal in the Chinese calendar. The “Year of the Rabbit” is actually the “Year of the Hare.” The Chinese also see the **imprint** of the jackrabbit in the moon. The shadows of the seas on the moon surface do produce an image that looks like a jackrabbit. The image certainly looks more like a jackrabbit than the “man in the moon.”

Summarize



(1) Summarize the differences between jackrabbits and rabbits.

Re-think



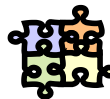
(2) How would a jackrabbit's quickness help it escape from danger?

Interpret



(3) At what time of day is there the greatest danger for jackrabbits?

Connect



(4) What other animals are considered to be tricksters?

Predict



(5) Why would the jackrabbit be bad luck in some cultures and good luck in other cultures?

“The Kangaroo” Comprehension Worksheet #26

Kangaroos are one of few animals in the wild that jump more than they run. Their ears are long and pointed. But, kangaroos stand like humans. And, they hop like frogs! Their coat is mostly brown with white on the bottom. Some even have gray coats. They have long, powerful tails. Kangaroos are famous for the *pouches* on their bellies. They carry their babies in these pouches.

In the wild, kangaroos are only found on one continent—Australia. Different types of kangaroos live in different areas, but mostly they live in grasslands near water. Some live in forests and still others live right outside of the city! Recently, the kangaroo habitat has increased.

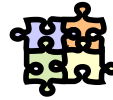
Like cows, kangaroos must eat their food, spit it back up, and then eat it again before they can store it. Some kangaroos graze at night, while others graze during the middle of the day. Kangaroos mostly eat grass and leaves. If they can find green plants that are not dead, they do not need to drink water. Kangaroos have special teeth that are designed for eating grasses. After they wear out, their back teeth fall out and new teeth grow in their place.

Most kangaroos have only one baby, called a *joey*, at a time. The joey is warmed in its mother’s pouch and rides comfortably as she hops. At about nine months, the joey leaves his mother’s pouch for short periods. It stays with its mother for a total of eighteen months before fully leaving her. Kangaroos move in groups. The groups are made up of one male, several females, and their young. Groups can consist of hundreds of kangaroos.

When kangaroos hop around, they use their powerful hind legs to push themselves off the ground. Their upper legs are strong, too. In fact, there have even been boxing events between kangaroos and men. The kangaroos always win. Kangaroos are very fast and can reach speeds of up to forty miles per hour! Also, when kangaroos are moving slowly, they often use their tail as an extra leg to help move themselves along.

Before European **settlement** in Australia, kangaroos were endangered. But, as the Europeans prepared lands for farming with added irrigation, the kangaroo population grew. Since the massive **extermination** of the kangaroo’s main predator, the Tasmanian wolf, kangaroos have even overpopulated some areas.

Connect



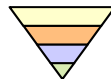
(1) What other animals are known for their jumping ability?

Predict



(2) Predict why the kangaroo habitat has recently increased.

Summarize



(3) Summarize their group and family relationships.

Re-think



(4) Why would people promote boxing matches between kangaroos and men?

Interpret



(5) For what two reasons have kangaroos increased in number?

“The Lion” Comprehension Worksheet #27

Lions are the second biggest cats in the wild. Mostly, lions are light brown. But, they also come in darker colors. Male lions have very large *manes*. The mane is made up of many small dark hairs on the side and back of the head. Lions are heavier than two people put together, but as fast as cars over short distances!

In Africa, lions can be found on the *savannahs*. These are the grassy areas with shady trees. Central and southern Africa have many savannahs. Lions also live in India. Of course, they are very popular zoo animals. In America alone, there are hundreds of lions in zoos.

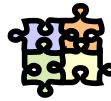
In the wild, lions eat mainly large animals. They like to eat zebras, buffaloes, and even elephants. Sometimes, they eat smaller animals or reptiles as well. They even might attack livestock (cows) in villages for food. Often, lions will steal food from hyenas and leopards, after those animals kill their prey. Lions hunt in packs and use strategic attacks to kill their food. All female lions hunt, but only some male lions will hunt. If a male has a mate, he will not hunt. In the zoo, keepers give lions beef and horse tails to eat.

Female lions usually give birth every two years. When they give birth, they usually have about one to five babies, called *cubs*. Only one out of five cubs survives their first two years of life. After two years of age, lions are taught to hunt. Lions live in large groups of females with few males. Groups, called *prides*, may even grow to forty lions.

When a male enters a new pride, it is not uncommon for him to kill all the cubs in the pride that are unable to run from him. He kills the cubs to ensure that all the future cubs in the pride will share his blood. Although the adult lion has no natural predators, the main job of male lions is to protect the pride and its territory. Both males and females defend against outside lions that try to join their pride. In the wild, lions live about fifteen years.

Lions are vulnerable to extinction. Massive efforts to expand the habitat of lions and provide them with **sufficient** prey have been somewhat successful. Thousands of years ago, lions used to roam the lands in North and South America, as well as in Europe and Asia. Scientists believe they died off in these areas due to human territorial expansion and disease.

Connect



(1) What other animals have manes?

Rethink



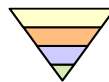
(2) Why won't male lions hunt if they have female mates?

Predict



(3) Predict why so few cubs survive their first years of life.

Summarize



(4) Summarize the role of the male lion in the pride.

Interpret



(5) Why would an animal with no natural predators be vulnerable to extinction?

“The Mouse” Comprehension Worksheet #28

The mouse is a very small animal. A mouse is one kind of *rodent*. It is not a little rat. Two or more are called *mice*. Mice are only about six inches long. That includes a very long, thin tail. They are white, brown, or gray. Their whiskers are also long. They have pink, round ears. Most mice run along the ground. Some can hop.

Mice can be found everywhere in the world. They live in grassy fields or forests. They live in mountain areas. They may also live in the walls of your home or apartment! Some live in science labs. There, they serve as *subjects* for study. Mice have helped scientists make many important discoveries.

Mice have babies year-round. Their average litter size is a dozen. Their babies are called *pups*. They are born without hair and their eyes are closed. Although mice may live up to two years in a science lab or as a pet, most mice live only about six months in the wild. They are favorite meals for cats, foxes, hawks, and snakes. Mice eat grains, rodent pellets, and of course they love cheese. The cartoon character mice have always loved their cheese.

In the wild, mice can be real pests. They eat farmer’s crops and they can also spread diseases. Some of the diseases are very serious. Mice are carriers of the deadly *hantavirus*, so it’s best to not handle wild mice.

At home, mice can be wonderful pets. They are intelligent and very clean. They like to play and are fun to watch. Mice will allow people to hold them and some will even do tricks. They live up to the expression, “as quiet as a mouse.” To properly care for pet mice, you need a special cage or aquarium. They sleep on a nest of **shredded** wood or clean paper.

Mice have always been popular subjects of literature. Mice are usually featured as intelligent and clever. They are also considered to be very **resourceful**. This means that mice are seen to be good problem-solvers and use their resources to their benefit. They also have starred in **animated** movies and cartoons. Of course, the most famous mouse would have to be Walt Disney’s “Mickey Mouse.” “Mickey Mouse” has appeared in thousands of movies, cartoons, television shows, and stories.

Re-think



(1) Why would many people confuse mice and rats?

Summarize



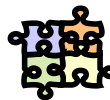
(2) Summarize where mice live.

Interpret



(3) Why do mice raised in labs live longer than mice in the wild?

Connect



(4) What other pets have similar behaviors and abilities as those of mice?

Predict



(5) Why would mice be such popular subjects of literature?

“The Newt” Comprehension Worksheet #29

The newt looks like a cross between a lizard and a frog. Newts are *amphibians*. They spend some of their lives in water and some out of water. Newts are part of the salamander family. They are dry and bumpy. Other salamanders are wet and smooth. Newts live mostly on land. Other salamanders live in water. Newts have four legs. Other salamanders have just two. Most salamanders are less than six inches long.

Newts are some of the oldest creatures on earth. They live most everywhere in the world. They like to live in shady areas under rocks, in hollow trees, or in holes that they dig. The holes are called *burrows*. Newts stay close to water because this is where they have their babies.

Newts hatch their babies from eggs. They lay their eggs on top of plants in streams, ponds, or lakes. The new mothers fold the plants over the eggs to protect them. The mothers lay about twenty eggs, twice per year. The newborns are called *tadpoles*. Just like frogs, they look more like fish when they are born. They grow legs and their gills turn into lungs that breathe air after they are born.

All newts are *carnivores*, so they eat meat. They eat worms, snails, fish, crayfish, and mice. They stalk their prey slowly and then pounce quickly. Sometimes newts wait until the prey walks close by them. Newts have long tongues that they use to snatch their **unsuspecting** meals.

Newts have a special ability to avoid being eaten by predators. Their skin produces a poison that animals have learned to **avoid**. Native Americans in the Northwest used to harvest this poison from newts. They tipped their arrows with this poison to kill their enemies. The poison is deadly to humans, so you probably shouldn't taste test!

Newt populations have declined throughout the world, due to destruction of their habitats. Water pollution has contributed greatly to the decline of the salamander population. The use of **pesticides** by farmers has increased water pollution because they eventually wash into streams, lakes, and rivers. Some countries, such as the United States and Great Britain, have passed laws to protect salamander habitats. It is even against the law to own a salamander as a pet in Great Britain.

Interpret



(1) How are newts different than most salamanders?

Connect



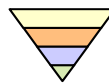
(2) How are newts similar to frogs?

Re-think



(3) Describe the hunting techniques of newts.

Summarize



(4) Summarize how the newt avoids being killed.

Predict



(5) Predict where newts have more of a chance to survive.

“The Pig” Comprehension Worksheet #30

The pig is also called a *hog* or a *swine*. Pigs have short legs and fat bodies. Their bodies have hair all over. Their heads are big and they have noses called *snouts*. Pigs have sharp teeth. Two of the teeth are called *tusks*. Pigs have four toes on each of their four feet. Pigs can be pink, brown, white, or black.

Pigs are found in all areas of the world. Pigs are *omnivores*, which means that they eat both animals and plants. Farm-raised pigs are well known for eating just about anything. They will eat insects, worms, garbage, leaves, grass, fruit, and flowers. Most pigs are raised by farmers for food. Pigs provide ham, bacon, pork chops, and sausage. Pig meat is called *pork*. Some religions have rules against eating pork. Farmers also raise pigs for their tough skins, which are dried into leather. Footballs are called “pig skins” because many are made from pigs. Pig hair is used to make hair brushes.

Female pigs are called *sows*. They have a litter of between six and twelve babies. The babies are called *piglets*. Many children and teenagers raise these piglets and “show” them in county fairs. The pigs are judged upon their beauty, grooming, size, and weight. Young people earn medals or ribbons for winning pigs and can even sell their pigs to the highest bidders at auction.

Pigs can’t cool themselves because they can’t sweat, so they roll in cool mud during hot weather. The mud also protects them from flies and acts as a sunscreen. Wild pigs are just as messy as farm pigs. Wild pigs can destroy farm crops and gardens. They also can be **aggressive** and have even attacked people.

Pigs are some of the smartest animals. Pot-bellied pigs have recently become very popular pets. They can be walked like dogs, and they can even be trained to perform tricks. Pigs are used in medical research, because many of their organs closely **resemble** those of humans.

Pigs are important cultural characters in countries throughout the world. Pigs have long been favorite subjects of literature and cartoons. “Porky the Pig” is one of the most popular animal television characters. “Babe” has starred in movies by the same name. The pig is even one of the animals on the twelve-year Chinese cycle of animals. The “Year of the Pig” is part of their calendar.

Interpret



(1) Why are pigs valuable livestock?

Connect



(2) What other animals do children raise to show at fairs?

Re-think



(3) What happens to pigs sold at auction?

Predict



(4) Why would people want pot-bellied pigs as pets?

Summarize



(5) Summarize the cultural importance of pigs.

“The Quail” Comprehension Worksheet #31

The quail is a bird that is part of the pheasant family. These birds all have six feathers on top of their heads. These feathers look like a hat. Quail are mostly gray. They have black faces. They also have big bellies. The quail is the state bird of California.

Quail live in many parts of the world. In fact, quail were brought into many countries. Most types of quail live in the same place all year. They walk more than they fly. Some quail, such as the quail in Japan, do fly to warmer places in the winter. These quail fly long distances.

Quail like to stay in small flocks called *coveys*. They like to look for food with other quail. Quail mostly eat seeds, but sometimes they will eat insects, berries, and leaves. The birds scratch the ground like chickens to find their food. The quail also like to take baths together. But, they use dirt, not water, to clean themselves. A group of quail picks a sunny place with soft dirt. The quail dig down 1-2 inches into soft dirt. They then flap their wings until the surrounding dirt and dust showers them all. Then, they leave the hole and flap their wings until the dirt and dust come off.

Female quail lay many eggs each year, but about a dozen at one time. The group of eggs is called a *clutch*. Families combine so that there is always at least one mother quail to watch the baby chicks. They hide their nests under bushes or sometimes rocks because many other animals like to eat quail eggs. Quail warn each other with a variety of calls if there is danger to the clutch.

Animals aren't the only ones that like quail eggs. Many people prefer quail eggs instead of chicken eggs. Some people even enjoy pickled quail eggs. In fact, quail eggs are becoming more popular. Quail farmers now raise quails for their eggs and their meat. Quail is served at some of the finest restaurants and some of the best chefs prepare these birds in many different ways.

Quail hunting is also very popular. Hunters look for quail and when they find them, they “flush” the birds into flight. The quail fly up from the ground very fast, and then they re-settle somewhere else just as fast. The hunters must be ready to shoot and react quickly. Hunters must be good shots in order to get these game birds. Some ranchers invite groups of hunters to hunt quail on their land. These ranchers **encourage** the growth of the quail population on their land because the ranchers charge the hunters to hunt these game birds.

Interpret



(1) How does the Japanese quail differ from that of the American quail?

Summarize



(2) Summarize the covey relationships of quail.

Re-think



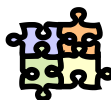
(3) Protecting the clutch requires a lot of cooperation. Explain how quail work together.

Predict



(4) Predict the future of quails raised for food.

Connect



(5) What other birds are hunted?

__P__



“The Raccoon” Comprehension Worksheet #32

A raccoon looks like a masked robber. Raccoons are mostly gray. But, around their eyes they have a black mask of fur. They are medium-sized and furry. They have long, bushy tails. Raccoons have short legs and soft paws. Their claws are very sharp.

Raccoons live in North America and in Europe. They are mainly forest animals. They climb trees with their sharp claws. Climbing helps them escape from other animals. Other raccoons live close to people near towns. Raccoons like to eat the same food as people. You might find one looking for food in a trash can or in a landfill.

Instead of sleeping at night and hunting in the daylight like most animals, raccoons sleep during the day and find food at night. Some raccoons are active in the day, but most are not. Raccoons are *omnivores*, so they eat both plants and animals. They eat mostly insects, bugs, worms, birds, and lizards. Sometimes, raccoons can be found sitting on rocks in a stream, fishing with their claws. They are also *scavengers*. That means that they will eat the dead bodies of animals.

Female raccoons will usually have two to five babies at a time. Babies, called *kits*, are born blind and deaf. The father has no part in raising the kits. After only six to nine weeks, male kits will leave their homes. By that time, they are ready to find their own food and live by themselves. Most raccoons live only a few years in the wild. Most of them end up dying by disease or sickness. They usually don't live long in the wild because of their diet.

In the wild, raccoons may be able to weigh up to sixty pounds! This is because they store up fat in their bodies to keep warm during the winter. In the winter months, they stay mostly *inactive*. Raccoons sleep a lot when it is cold outside. Although they sleep a lot, raccoons do not *hibernate* like some animals such as bears. They remain *aler* and can wake up quickly if predators come to a tack.

Raccoons are not threatened or endangered. At different points in history, the raccoon population has neared extinction due to hunting. Their thick fur is prized for coats and hats. But, the population has slowly made a comeback in recent history. Still today, professional trappers catch raccoons for their fur. In most places, it is illegal to keep raccoons as pets, although some people still keep them. They are dangerous to have as pets, because they may act aggressively in some situations.

Predict



(1) Why might some people consider raccoons to be pets?

Connect



(2) What other animals are scavengers?

Re-think



(3) What foods in the raccoon diet might bring about disease or sickness?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the life of a raccoon in the winter months.

Interpret



(5) What might influence raccoon hunting?

“The Seagull” Comprehension Worksheet #33

The seagull is one type of gull. A gull is just one kind of bird. There are over 1,000 kinds of birds in the world. The seagull is a bird that we often see at the beach. Seagulls are medium to large birds. They are usually gray or white with some black color. They have curved yellow bills. They squawk and screech loudly. Seagulls are also very smart.

Seagulls are found throughout Canada and the United States. They usually live in coastal areas. Some live inland near lakes and rivers. Seagulls can drink both fresh and saltwater. They can fly long distances. Some gulls live on islands far from the coast. They travel many miles from their island homes each day. They visit beaches and coastal areas to get food.

Mothers lay two to three eggs at a time. Seagulls are very **protective** of their babies. They take care of them for up to six months after they are born, providing food and protection. Some of the babies will remain close to their mothers even after they have grown up. Seagull families form expanded family units called **colonies**. All birds in the colonies work together to protect their territories by attacking predators as large groups. Some seagulls have been known to attack people, but this is rare.

Seagulls are *carnivores*, so they eat meat. They mostly eat fish, shellfish, and small rodents. However, seagulls will eat anything that people leave behind. They will eat **rotting** meat and garbage at landfills. They will even eat left-over candy, cigarette butts, and french fries at the beach.

The better their diet, the longer seagulls live. The average seagull lives 10 to 12 years. However, some have been known to live much longer. Their life spans also depend upon the type and number of predators in the seagull's habitats. Some individual gulls have been known to live over 25 years.

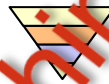
Because seagulls can live in many places, they have become problem pests in some areas. They gather in farming areas, in landfills, or even on school grounds, looking for food to eat. Their droppings are smelly and hard to clean. Half of the birds that crash into airplanes are seagulls. Seagulls have been known to crack airplane windows and cause much damage if they fly into the engines.

Re-think



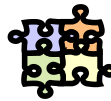
(1) Why might some say that the seagull habitat is flexible?

Summarize



(2) Summarize the relationships of seagulls within their colonies.

Connect



(3) What other animals' life spans are especially influenced by their diets?

Interpret



(4) Why would many people consider seagulls to be pests?

Predict



(5) Given the ability of seagulls to adapt to different environments, predict the future of these birds.

“The Tiger” Comprehension Worksheet #34

Tigers are the largest cats in the wild. Most tigers have orange and brown coats. Their stripes are black. Some very rare tigers are mostly white. Males are longer than females. Tiger teeth are sharp and very long.

In the wild, tigers live mostly in forests. But, they also live in the jungle. In the forest or jungle, tigers can blend in with their stripes. Tigers must live next to water. Unlike other cats, which avoid water, tigers seek it out. They are excellent swimmers and can swim up to four miles. Wild tigers can only be found in Asia. Most of them live in Vietnam and India.

Different types of tigers hunt different animals, but all tigers are *carnivores*. Mostly, tigers eat medium-sized animals. Common prey includes boars, pythons, leopards, crocodiles, and monkeys. Tigers hunt alone. They **stalk** their prey before attacking and overpowering it. Mostly, tigers kill their prey by strangling the prey with their jaws. But, sometimes they will strike their prey with their paws. After taking their prey, tigers often carry their prey to other places. Tigers have been known to carry heavy livestock while running and jumping over fences or rocks!

Female tigers have baby *cubs* after months of pregnancy. At eight weeks of age, baby cubs are ready to leave the den with their mother. The mother trains the cubs for about two and a half years. The father is not involved in this training. After training, female cubs find territory near their mothers, while males find another male’s territory to challenge and control.

Tigers breed very well in zoos. Due to this, the tiger population in zoos may soon equal the entire world’s population of wild tigers! An estimated 12,000 tigers are being kept as private pets. In Texas alone, there are an estimated 4,000 pet tigers! Only nineteen states have banned private ownership of tigers. Fifteen states **require** a license to own one, and sixteen have no rules at all!

Illegal hunting, called *poaching*, has led to the decrease of the tiger population in the wild. An illegal tiger fur trade has encouraged illegal hunting. Efforts to restore natural habitat to tigers have been successful in India, China, and Russia. Projects involving reintroducing tigers into the wild have been largely unsuccessful in India.

Re-think



(1) How would the tiger’s stripes help the animal blend into their surroundings?

Interpret



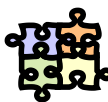
(2) Why would the tiger’s ability to swim be important?

Summarize



(3) Summarize how tigers kill their prey.

Connect



(4) What other unusual animals are kept as pets?

Predict



(5) Why would efforts to reintroduce the tiger work in some areas, but not in others?

“The Vulture” Comprehension Worksheet #35

The vulture is not the most beautiful bird. But, other vultures like the way they look. They are largely black or brown birds with white under their wings. Their heads and necks have no feathers. Their powerful beaks are curved. Vulture wings are huge.

These birds are found on every continent, except for Antarctica and Australia. Vultures are *scavengers*. That means that they eat the dead bodies of animals. Dead bodies are called *corpses*. Vultures in Africa, Asia, and Europe look for corpses by sight. Those in North and South America find their corpses mostly by smell.

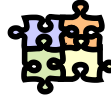
When vultures find an animal that is hurt, they will circle high in the sky above the animal. They wait until the animal dies to land and begin eating. Sometimes vultures will kill the weakened animal. Vultures feed individually or in groups. They will eat until full and then rest to digest the food before leaving. If the hide of an animal is too thick for vultures to tear, the vultures will wait for other animals to begin the meal, and then they will clean up what remains.

Vultures are very important to the web of life. They are part of nature’s recycling. Vultures eat all but the smallest pieces and bone. The smallest pieces are then eaten by decomposers, such as bugs. The **remaining** chemicals can then be used again by plants and animals. Without decomposers and scavengers, the world would be covered with dead plants and animals.

Even though vultures have an important part to play in the web of life, many people fear these birds. Vultures are, of course, closely related to death. In the Western world, the image of the vulture is very negative. Vultures frequently serve as metaphors for cowardly behavior in literature, in poetry, or in speech. In the Eastern world, the image of the vulture is more positive. Vultures are seen as necessary **contributors** to the cycle of life. In fact, some Buddhist death ceremonies encourage vultures to eat dead human corpses.

The vulture population in **agricultural** India, Nepal, and Pakistan has seriously declined in the past decade. This decline is due to the fact that medicine used to treat farm animals has poisoned vultures as they eat the medicated animal corpses. As a result, other scavengers such as dogs and rats have taken over for the vultures. These animals are more likely than vultures to carry disease, such as rabies, and create health problems for people.

Connect



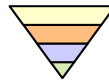
(1) What other animals are scavengers?

Re-think



(2) What might be the purpose of their circling high in the sky?

Summarize



(3) Summarize the important role of the vulture.

Interpret



(4) Why are vultures feared in some cultures, but welcomed in others?

Predict



(5) What might scientists work on to protect vultures?

“The Wolf” Comprehension Worksheet #36

Wolves are a lot like dogs. But, they are bigger and stronger than most dogs. Wolves have strong legs and bodies. They run very fast. They also run for a long time without being tired. Wolves have strong paws. They can run on ice and rocks. Wolves have very furry coats. Their coats can have shades of gray, white, brown, red, or black.

Wolves live in almost all parts of the world. They like colder areas, but they can live in warm areas, too. Some wolves live in forests. Others live in the mountains. Wolves live almost anywhere except the rainforest and desert.

Wolves like to eat sheep, goats, and deer. Since they are fast and strong, wolves are able to hunt prey much larger than they are. Sometimes, wolves will eat small prey, too. Wolf packs use **strategic** hunting to surround their prey and strike at the perfect time. Wolves do not chase their prey. If they cannot catch it at first, they will usually let it go. Wolves also practice “**surplus** killing,” in which they kill many animals at once and save them for meals later. But, wolves do not need to eat even for long periods of time. They have been known to go up to seventeen days without a meal.

A group of wolves is called a *pack*. A mother and father pair leads each wolf pack. This pair solves any problems within the group and they control the food. Most of these pairs stay together for their entire lives. They have babies, called *pups*, and raise them within the pack. Wolves are ranked within a pack by fighting each other. In large packs, the ranking of different wolves may change often. Packs can contain up to twenty wolves, but they most commonly consist of just eight.

Wolves often howl to communicate with each other. Howling allows packs of wolves to communicate with each other, because they can hear each other even through very thick forests. Sometimes, wolves howl for no **apparent** reason. Scientists think that they may howl to bond with each other in a form of friendship. Scientists compare this type of howling to human singing.

For years, wolves were hunted to protect farmers’ livestock. Laws were passed to protect wolves and these animals were re-introduced in some areas. There are now over 9,000 wolves in the United States alone. Recently, wolves were officially taken off the U.S. Endangered Species List.

Re-think



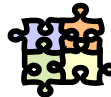
(1) Why would the great running ability of the wolf be an advantage for a predator?

Summarize



(2) Summarize the hunting techniques of the wolf.

Connect



(3) What other animals establish leadership through fighting?

Interpret



(4) Why would the ability of the wolf to howl be helpful with their style of hunting?

Predict



(5) How will the growing wolf population affect people?

“The X-ray Fish” Comprehension Worksheet #37

The x-ray fish is a fish you can see through. These fish have very little skin. It just covers their bellies. The rest of the body is covered in a thin silver *sac*. You can see the bones of these fish! That is why they are called x-ray fish. There are a few spots of color on these fish, but not many.

These fish come from South America. The tropical river areas have a lot of these little fish. They are freshwater fish, not salt-water fish. Although, the x-ray fish can live in almost any type of water. Now many of them live in homes called *aquariums*. Aquariums are homes that people make for fish and other water animals. Aquariums can be as small as a tiny fishbowl or as large as a football field.

X-ray fish don't like to swim at the top or bottom of rivers and aquariums. They like swimming in the middle depths. These fish establish their own territories in aquariums. They mark out certain spots between plants and they tend to stay much of their time in these spots. Male and female partners usually swim in groups, but they rest close to one another. Males are thinner than females. The females lay eggs and can have lots of baby x-ray fish.

X-ray fish are very **popular** aquarium fish and can be found in most all tropical fish stores. They do well with flake fish food, but they are *omnivores*. This means that they eat not only plants, but also other fish. Any fish they eat must be small though, because both male and female x-ray fish are only about one-inch long.

Fish can be wonderful pets. However, they do require a lot of care. For freshwater fish, their water must be kept fresh. This means that fish owners have to change water often. Usually, people buy filters for larger fish tanks if they keep more than a few fish. The filter keeps the water fresh by circulating it **continuously**. The chemical balance and temperature of the water have to be appropriate. Otherwise, the fish can get sick and die. X-ray fish are some of the easiest fish to care for because they **survive** well in non-moving water, in hard water (with few minerals), and in soft water (with more minerals).

Fish owners do have to be careful about their mix of fish. Some types of fish get along better than others. The fish habitat needs to be planned well to provide the right features for the types of fish that the owners collect.

Predict



(1) Why would x-ray fish be good aquarium fish?

Summarize



(2) Summarize the territorial nature of x-ray fish.

Re-think



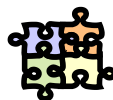
(3) What fish would live well with the x-ray fish?

Interpret



(4) Who should not keep fish as pets?

Connect



(5) How do your pets or those of your friends need special care?

“The Yak” Comprehension Worksheet #38

The yak is a large animal that lives in the mountains of Asia. Yaks are strong, heavy cattle. They are white, brown, or black. Their hearts and lungs are very large. This helps them live in the mountains, where the air is thin. They have long, shaggy hair. The shaggy hair keeps them from the cold.

Yaks live in the Himalaya Mountains of Central Asia. Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, is located there. They also live in Mongolia, which is north of China. Yaks do not live in lowland areas. They like high grasslands that have no trees.

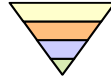
Yaks like to stay in a group, called a **herd**. A yak herd has from ten to thirty animals. Yaks will huddle together on cold winter nights or during snowstorms to keep warm. Yak females are pregnant for nine months, just like human mothers. The average lifespan of a yak is about twenty years.

Farmers have many uses for yaks. Yaks produce milk and farmers make cheese and butter from that milk. Yaks also have very tasty meat. Yaks are often used as pack animals. They carry **burdens** across high mountain passes for farmers. Yaks pull plows to dig up the farm soil for planting. Yak hairs are spun into yarn for knitting. The hair is used to make rope and rugs. Yak hide is used to make shoes.

In parts of the Himalayan nation of Tibet, yak racing is a part of special celebrations. Tibetans enjoy seeing these large cattle race against each other. Business people are also using yaks to promote tourism. Some Tibetans have recently begun using yaks to pull cross-country skiers. For years, yaks have been employed to carry hiking gear for hikers and climbers. As hiking and climbing in the Himalayas become increasingly popular, yaks may have a greater role in the near future.

The once large wild yak population of Central Asia is now threatened by extinction. Yak hunting has not been controlled by governments. The profit motive for yak hunting is high. Hunters have killed too many of these animals to **maintain** a healthy population. The future of wild yaks in Central Asia remains uncertain.

Summarize



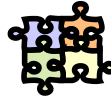
(1) How are yaks well-suited for cold weather?

Interpret



(2) How would huddling together help yaks stay warm?

Connect



(3) What other cattle have similar uses as those of yaks?

Predict



(4) What greater role could yaks have in the near future?

Re-think



(5) What would have to happen to maintain a healthy population of yaks?

“The Zebra” Comprehension Worksheet #39

Zebras are black or dark animals with white stripes and bellies. Zebras look and act like horses. On the tops of their heads, they have short manes of hair. Their eyes are on the sides of their heads. They can see and hear very well. Zebras are about the size of small horses and donkeys.

In Africa, zebras live in grassy areas. They mostly live away from trees. But, some types of zebras like trees. Others live in grassy hills or mountains near the ocean or sea. Every rainy season, zebras leave their homes and move. They depend on water in the dry season and they never live too far away from water holes. Zebras can be found in zoos across the world.

Zebras are *omnivores* and grazing animals, like cows and horses. They search out grassy areas and slowly eat away the grass. Sometimes, they eat small bushes, leaves, twigs, or bark as well. They spend most of their day eating and finding food. Without rain, zebras cannot survive. They depend on the rain to make the grasses grow and to provide them with water for drinking and bathing.

As highly social animals, zebras live in large groups. Males without female partners live alone or with groups of other bachelors until they are strong enough to challenge another male for his mate. Zebras make permanent **bonds** with each other. Females give birth to one baby, called a *foal*, about once a year. Foals are brown and white instead of black and white at birth. Babies can stand and walk by themselves soon after they are born. Their mothers nurse them for about one year.

Many people have attempted to domesticate zebras for riding or doing work. These attempts have been largely unsuccessful over the years. Unlike horses and donkeys, zebras tend to panic when they are put into stressful situations. However, some successful attempts at taming zebras have **occurred**. A few zebras have been trained to pull wagons and even perform in circuses.

Human contact with zebras has always decreased the zebra habitat, but mostly since the Nineteenth Century. Zebras were, and still are, hunted for their shiny black and white coats. Different species of zebras are more threatened than others. The chief natural predators of zebras are lions. As the lion population rises or declines, the zebra population rises or declines.

Re-think



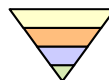
(1) How does water affect the lives of zebras?

Interpret



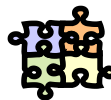
(2) Why do zebras have to spend so much of their day eating and finding food?

Summarize



(3) Summarize their pack and family relationships.

Connect



(4) What other animals can't be domesticated?

Predict



(5) How would an extinction of lions affect zebras?

“The Sheep” Comprehension Worksheet #40

Sheep are animals with thick, curly fur. They are about as big as most large dogs. Sheep look a lot like goats. Different types of sheep come in different colors. Most sheep are white or brown. Some sheep have long fur. Others have short fur. Still others have no fur at all! Sheep are raised on farms or ranches. They are raised for their fur, called *wool*. They are also raised for their meat. Sheep can be found all over the world. China, Australia, India, and Iran have the largest amounts of sheep. Different types of sheep live better in different areas. They can live in open grassy areas, deserts, and in valleys.

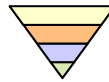
Sheep are *herbivores*. This means that they only eat plants. They usually eat grass, leaves, and stems. Often, when sheep eat their food, they will spit it out and re-chew it like cows. Sheep spend most of their day **grazing** (finding food). They prefer shorter grasses to longer ones. The best land for sheep grazing is land with many different types of grasses. Sheep also need to have lots of clean water to drink.

Sheep live in groups called *flocks*. Most sheep find mates about once a year. Males fight each other to become the most powerful male of the group. If males, called *rams*, are left alone together, they might hurt or even kill each other! Baby sheep are called *lambs*. Usually, sheep live for about ten to twenty years.

Since female sheep are slow moving and have no horns, they have no way of protecting themselves. Their chief predator is the coyote. But, occasionally they will become the victim of a dog, mountain lion, or bear. To protect their sheep, farmers often use guard dogs, guard llamas, or even guard donkeys. Guard animals are raised in the same habitat as the sheep to allow them to form a personal bond with the sheep. The guard animals are also protective shepherders. They can gather a flock of sheep very quickly.

Although sheep have the **reputation** for being unintelligent animals, sheep are very smart and clever in their own ways. Sheep are excellent at remembering faces. They can remember up to fifty faces of other sheep or even humans. According to researchers, sheep even form friendships with certain other sheep. Some sheep have even been known to self-medicate themselves. If they are sick, they choose to eat certain plants that have healing abilities. These human-like qualities prove that sheep are not as dumb as people sometimes make them out to be.

Summarize



(1) Summarize why farmers or ranchers raise sheep.

Connect



(2) What other animals, other than cows, are grazing animals?

Predict



(3) Predict what sheepherders need to do with their rams.

Interpret



(4) How could the guard animals mentioned help defend sheep against a coyote?

Re-think



(5) Why would the sheep's ability to remember faces be an important skill?



“The Whale” Comprehension Worksheet #41

The whale is the largest animal on earth. Many whales are bigger than elephants, but some are smaller. There are many types of whales. One of the largest whales is the humpback whale. Humpback whales are usually about 50 feet long. They weigh as much as 44 big trucks. The largest one ever measured was 88 feet long. Humpback whales have large humps on their backs. Their fins are very long. Their tail is wavy-shaped and very large.

Humpback whales live in all the major oceans. They move a lot. Every summer, most humpbacks swim to cooler ocean waters. Some swim as many as 16,000 miles. Then, they swim back to tropical waters in the winter. There they have babies and feed.

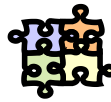
Humpback whales are mammals, so they have live births. The baby whales are called *calves*. Mother whales are very protective of their calves and will sometimes attack boats that get too close to their babies. Once calves leave their mothers, they like stay by themselves. Humpback whales will group for feeding or play, but they spend most of their time alone.

They eat in a variety of ways. Since humpbacks are *baleen* whales, they open their mouths wide and swim into groups of fish and plankton. The whales have a **strainer** in their throats that separates the water from their meal. Humpback whales will quickly lunge into an area to surprise fish. They will also slap the ocean surface to “shock” fish into staying still. Sometimes, groups of humpback whales will gather together and stir the water up so that it produces a wall of bubbles, which traps the fish. They only eat in the summer and live off fat reserves during the winter months.

The whaling industry reduced the world population of humpback whales to dangerously low levels in the last century. Since the 1960s, most countries have agreed to ban hunting humpback whales. Also, poisons have killed many whales. Sometimes the whales get trapped in fishing nets or rammed by ships. Fortunately, the humpback whales have increased in numbers recently, but they will remain on protected species lists.

Whale-watching tours have become very popular since the 1990s. Humpback whales are most **frequently** the main attractions. They are very curious animals and will come very close to boats. They also enjoy leaping into the air and splashing, which is known as *breaching*. They can also blow water 10 to 15 feet in the air. They also sing very loud “whale songs.”

Connect



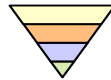
(1) Compare the length of the largest whale to something at school.

Re-think



(2) What other animals have to move every season?

Summarize



(3) Summarize humpback family relationships.

Interpret



(4) How would bubbles trap the fish?

Predict



(5) How will the growing humpback population affect future tourism?

“The Python” Comprehension Worksheet #42

Pythons are snakes that are not poisonous. Adult pythons are all different sizes. They can be from one foot long to thirty feet long! Different types of pythons have different colors. Some are bright and green. Others are dark and brown. Pythons **blend** in with their surroundings.

In the wild, pythons are found all over the East. They can be found in Africa, India, Vietnam, and Australia. They mostly live in wet areas, like rain forests or swamps. But, some live in grasslands or woodlands. Brown pythons live mostly in areas covered by brown trees or dirt. Green pythons tend to stay in areas with green leaves or trees.

Unlike many snakes, pythons kill their prey without poison. Instead, pythons hunt down their prey and wrap themselves around it until it cannot breathe. Different types of pythons eat different animals. Large pythons may even eat deer or gazelles! Smaller pythons mostly eat smaller animals like rodents or reptiles. Pythons swallow their prey whole. It may even take several days or weeks to digest the food. Although they are big and strong, pythons do not usually threaten humans.

Female pythons lay eggs, unlike some snakes which have live babies. After they lay their eggs, females will sit on them until they hatch. While sitting on the eggs, pythons move their muscles to provide heat for the eggs. They only leave their eggs to rest in the sun to get warmer for the eggs. Females will not eat until their eggs are hatched. Females only have babies once every two to four years, because the process is so difficult.

Pythons are some of the biggest predators in their habitats. However, small, young pythons are in danger from attacks from other animals. Often, birds, other mammals, frogs, and even other snakes will hunt down baby pythons. Adult pythons are also at risk to large birds of prey, like eagles or hawks, and to large *carnivores* like lions and leopards.

At least two known species of pythons are currently endangered. Other python species are also declining due to deforestation of the rain forests, other habitat **destruction**, and the snake skin trade. Snake skins have been used for clothing, shoes, purses, and decoration. However, **designers** have not included snake skins in their fashion lines for many years.

Predict



(1) Why would it be important for pythons to blend in with their surroundings?

Re-think



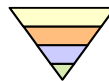
(2) What advantage would slow digestion have for the python?

Interpret



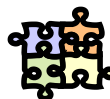
(3) Why do female pythons have to move their muscles to provide heat for the eggs?

Summarize



(4) Summarize the position of the python in the food chain.

Connect



(5) What other animals are endangered due to the demands of fashion?



“The Cheetah” Comprehension Worksheet #43

The cheetah is the fastest animal on land. Cheetahs can run as fast as most cars over short distances. Unlike many cats, cheetahs have a narrow waist, making them smaller and less heavy than a lion or tiger. Their fur is rough and short. Their color is light brown and white with spots of black. Their tails have a ball of fur at the end. Unlike most big cats, cheetahs cannot roar.

In Africa, cheetahs mainly live in the hot grassy areas. These areas are called the *savannah*. It can get very warm on the African savannah. Less frequently, cheetahs live in the mountains or in forests. They are mostly found in Africa, but some cheetahs also live in Asia.

Cheetahs are *carnivores*. They eat mostly medium-sized animals like gazelles. Sometimes, they will hunt for zebras or wildebeests, too. While other big cats (like lions) hunt only at night, cheetahs hunt during the daytime. Also, while many animals use their sense of smell to hunt, cheetahs hunt with their excellent eyesight. Once they have found their prey, they slowly follow until there is an open field. Cheetahs then use a burst of speed to catch their prey.

Male cheetahs live in groups, while females live alone. Males are **territorial**. Females do not have territories; instead, they share land with other females. Females have about three to five babies at a time. The mothers raise these baby *cubs* for 18 months. During this time, the cubs learn how to hunt and avoid predators. After this time, the mothers leave their babies. The cubs stay together for another six months. After that, the females separate themselves from the group of their **siblings**. The males live together for life.

As the smallest and least powerful predators in their habitat, cheetahs try to avoid contact with lions, leopards, hyenas, and wild dogs. Since cheetahs are designed for extreme bursts of speed and not for power, baby cubs are often targeted by these large predators. Mother cheetahs will defend their young and are sometimes successful. Males will form groups to chase off predators.

Cheetah cubs have an unusually high death rate due to their predators. About 13,000 cheetahs still live in the wild today. Cheetah **conservation** efforts have been somewhat successful in South Africa and Iran. However, cheetahs are generally vulnerable to extinction.

Re-think



(1) How would the cheetah’s speed assist them in hunting?

Summarize



(2) Summarize where cheetahs live.

Connect



(3) Why wouldn’t cheetahs just chase their prey, rather than slowly following it?

Interpret



(4) How are male cheetahs different from female cheetahs?

Predict



(5) What changes in a habitat would help increase the cheetah population?

The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

Expository Articles

“The Ape” Comprehension Worksheet #1

- (1) Deforestation of the rain forest.
- (2) They swing from trees; they eat the plants and leaves of the trees.
- (3) They live as single adults; females raise the babies; males fight for the females.
- (4) Student answers will vary.
- (5) Protecting the rain forest; banning ownership of orangutans as pets; reducing palm farming.

“The Eagle” Comprehension Worksheet #2

- (1) To protect their nests from predators; to adjust to changing weather conditions.
- (2) Their wings and feet are not designed for swimming.
- (3) Prey is located in water or near water areas.
- (4) Despite opposition from Ben Franklin, the Continental Congress selected the eagle in 1782.
- (5) Student answers will vary. Perhaps because it is the national bird of the United States.

“The Ibex” Comprehension Worksheet #3

- (1) Darker fur in the non-snowy seasons would provide more camouflage.
- (2) Hard feet would be more comfortable, produce less injuries, and provide better support.
- (3) Fruit is less likely to grow in the mountains.
- (4) Males stay separate to fight for the females.
- (5) The male heads were prized by hunters; ibexes were also hunted for their medicinal value.

“The Okapi” Comprehension Worksheet #4

- (1) No. Their body shapes and short horns make them unlikely predators.
- (2) Okapi prefer mountain and forest areas and need open land to graze.
- (3) Okapi live only in one country in mountain and forest areas.
- (4) Student answers will vary.
- (5) Loggers, miners, farmers are moving into their territory; also, poachers want their skins.

“The Mule” Comprehension Worksheet #5

- (1) The mix produces the useful abilities of both the horse and the donkey.
- (2) These areas are generally poor and mules are needed for farming and transportation there.
- (3) They need to plan whether they want a more horse-like or donkey-like foal.
- (4) They are smart and proud animals with good memories.
- (5) There is no threat of extinction; the mule population is in balance.



The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Rooster” Comprehension Worksheet #6

- (1) Coops provide temperature control, a place for laying eggs, and protection.
- (2) Grazing requires a lot of room to provide enough bugs, seeds, and plants to eat.
- (3) Student answers will vary.
- (4) They think it is animal cruelty because roosters are hurt or killed.
- (5) Chicken populations will grow as human populations grow.

“The Woodpecker” Comprehension Worksheet #7

- (1) Since Australia is an island, far from the other continents, woodpeckers can't fly there.
- (2) Their toes help them grip; their pointed beaks help them tap; their tongues help them eat.
- (3) Male and female woodpeckers work together to raise and protect their babies.
- (4) They tap trees constantly.
- (5) They are loud and they can destroy trees.

“The Cow” Comprehension Worksheet #8

- (1) Student answers will vary.
- (2) Few wild cows exist because cows are so valuable, also, their diet and care are poor.
- (3) Younger cows are too valuable to kill.
- (4) Hooves and tails require care; cows need protection from the cold; their diet needs to be controlled.
- (5) Most cows are domesticated animals. Their population increases to match human demand.

“The Koi” Comprehension Worksheet #9

- (1) They are colorful and can be kept in koi ponds.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Perhaps they will eat other fish or they will destroy habitat.
- (3) Owners might need separate ponds or tanks, each with filtration systems.
- (4) The right food and water with good texture and filtration.
- (5) Student answers will vary.

“The Hawk” Comprehension Worksheet #10

- (1) Because of their talons, they must be carnivores. So they must eat meat.
- (2) They can see their prey and avoid being seen.
- (3) Because they are birds, they can't chase their prey. So they must surprise unsuspecting animals.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Falcons would be a good answer.
- (5) The population is balanced, especially in protected areas such as national parks.



The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Ermine” Comprehension Worksheet #11

- (1) To help camouflage them in snow.
- (2) Student answers will vary.
- (3) Females raise the babies; males do not.
- (4) White seems clean and pure; it is not dark.
- (5) The coats are beautiful; they are associated with royalty and good luck.

“The Armadillo” Comprehension Worksheet #12

- (1) They live and dig holes on people’s property; they tear apart wood.
- (2) The claws are used to dig and tear apart wood to get at ants.
- (3) Mostly, armadillos stay to themselves.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Perhaps so armadillos can cover more territory to search for food.
- (5) Increasing human population reduces or changes the habitats of animals.

“The Orca” Comprehension Worksheet #13

- (1) Orcas prefer cold water, so they move from season to season.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Perhaps wolves, because they are mentioned.
- (3) Orcas travel in extended families called pods.
- (4) Fishermen are people who provide fish and pay taxes.
- (5) Student answers will vary. Perhaps global warming will decrease orca habitats.

“The Anteater” Comprehension Worksheet #14

- (1) Because they eat only insects, armadillos much search constantly for these small creatures.
- (2) Rocks help break apart the bugs they eat.
- (3) Anteaters eat pests and bugs; they also don’t destroy the habitat.
- (4) The mothers care for their babies for two years.
- (5) Student answers will vary.

“The Elephant” Comprehension Worksheet #15

- (1) They live on Asian and African grasslands and in zoos.
- (2) They require some much food and water that they may have to travel to get these.
- (3) Males stay in the herd until ages ten to thirteen.
- (4) They show compassion and grief; they also have excellent memories.
- (5) Student answers will vary. However, the population is in decline.

The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Iguana” Comprehension Worksheet #16

- (1) Iguanas are large greenish lizards with long fingers and sharp teeth.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Perhaps monkeys, snakes, and cats.
- (3) Other animals eat their eggs and the female does not protect them.
- (4) They are exotic pets and require special treatment.
- (5) People want them as pets.

“The Otter” Comprehension Worksheet #17

- (1) There are thirteen types of fresh water and salt water otters.
- (2) Nursing mothers need more nutrition to make milk.
- (3) Mothers protect and care for their babies for six months.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Perhaps whales or wolves.
- (5) Student answers will vary. Perhaps otters will recover in protected areas.

“The Umbrella Bird” Comprehension Worksheet #18

- (1) Their wattles and head feathers are so long.
- (2) The mountains are colder. There are fewer predators.
- (3) With their beaks, they slam their prey up against trees before eating.
- (4) Student answers will vary.
- (5) Umbrella birds are in danger of extinction due to rapid deforestation.

“The Bear” Comprehension Worksheet #19

- (1) Brown bears can hunt livestock or threaten humans.
- (2) As omnivores, they eat plants, berries, and small mammals.
- (3) Mothers care for their cubs for two to four years.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Perhaps wolves, lions, or great white sharks.
- (5) Grizzlies would not mix well in heavily populated human habitats.

“The Camel” Comprehension Worksheet #20

- (1) Camels are used for transportation, cargo carriers, and warfare.
- (2) Camels are known for their humps and ability to go without water. People put these two together.
- (3) Camels are pregnant for thirteen months, while women are pregnant for nine months.
- (4) They require little care and can survive harsh conditions.
- (5) Little hope for the remaining wild camels remains because previous efforts have failed.



The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Dog” Comprehension Worksheet #21

- (1) Dogs are used for rescue, as guides to the blind, for guard or police work, for herding, for hunting, and for entertainment.
- (2) Certain foods are dangerous for dogs.
- (3) Dogs are smart, lovable, and obey commands.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Cats would be a good answer.
- (5) Student answers will vary. As humans spread into their habitats, wild dogs decline.

“The Fox” Comprehension Worksheet #22

- (1) Yes, because they are fast and they try to hide from humans.
- (2) Foxes have their own territories and hunt on their own.
- (3) They are very fast.
- (4) Student answers will vary.
- (5) Although hunted, red fox populations are not threatened.

“The Goose” Comprehension Worksheet #23

- (1) There is less wind resistance for most of the birds.
- (2) They are messy and they eat crops.
- (3) Student answers will vary. Global warming and growing human populations change habitats.
- (4) They are messy, aggressive, and eat crops.
- (5) Student answers will vary.

“The Horse” Comprehension Worksheet #24

- (1) Donkeys, mules, zebras, and fish for a few.
- (2) They provide transportation, they work on the farm, and people race them.
- (3) Predators in the wild horse habitats affect them. Availability of water is a factor.
- (4) The future looks good due to controlled predator populations and government support.
- (5) More water holes and improved grasslands.

“The Jackrabbit” Comprehension Worksheet #25

- (1) Jackrabbits are larger, have floppy ears, make their homes above ground in nests, and are born with complete fur.
- (2) Their speed and leaping ability can help them sometimes escape their predators.
- (3) Night is the most dangerous because they are out looking for food.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Foxes, cats, and coyotes would be good answers.
- (5) Student answers will vary.



The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Kangaroo” Comprehension Worksheet #26

- (1) Frogs, rabbits, cats, jackrabbits would be good answers.
- (2) More food and less predators would be good predictions.
- (3) Kangaroos mothers and babies have close relationships. Kangaroos stay in groups of one male, many females, and their babies.
- (4) Kangaroos are very popular animals and are known for their boxing abilities.
- (5) More irrigated farmlands and the extinction of the Tasmanian wolf.

“The Lion” Comprehension Worksheet #27

- (1) Student answers will vary. Horses and zebras would be good answers.
- (2) The male feels that it is his job to protect the pride, not hunt.
- (3) Adult male lions may kill the cubs.
- (4) Adult male lions protect the pride and keep other lions from joining their pride.
- (5) Disease and limitation of their habitat by increasing human populations.

“The Mouse” Comprehension Worksheet #28

- (1) They look very similar with their faces and long tails.
- (2) They live in mountain, field, and forest areas. They also live in houses and laboratories.
- (3) In the labs, they have better diets and no predators.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Hamsters and ferrets would be good comparisons.
- (5) They are cute and clever and they live where humans live.

“The Newt” Comprehension Worksheet #29

- (1) Newts live mostly on the land, salamanders live mostly in the water.
- (2) Both hatch from eggs into tadpoles and grow legs and lungs after birth.
- (3) They hunt by surprising passing prey with quick, long tongues that snatch their food.
- (4) Their skin is poisonous.
- (5) Areas away from farms.

“The Pig” Comprehension Worksheet #30

- (1) Pigs have many uses: meat, leather, entertainment, medical research, and pets.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Sheep and cows are common answers.
- (3) They are butchered and eaten or used to raise other pigs.
- (4) They can be walked; they play tricks; and they are very smart.
- (5) Pigs are popular subjects of literature, movies, television, and are even part of the Chinese calendar.



The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Quail” Comprehension Worksheet #31

- (1) Japanese quail fly much more and migrate annually.
- (2) Quail look for food together and the covey works together to protect their eggs.
- (3) They alternate watching their eggs; they also use a variety of calls to warn of danger.
- (4) Quail eggs are becoming more popular, so probably more quails will be raised.
- (5) Student answers will vary.

“The Raccoon” Comprehension Worksheet #32

- (1) Raccoons go through people’s trash.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Vultures would be a good answer.
- (3) Dead bodies of animals.
- (4) They eat less, are less active, and they sleep a lot during the winter.
- (5) Fashion will decide whether raccoon fur is desired.

“The Seagull” Comprehension Worksheet #33

- (1) Because seagulls drink both salt and fresh water, they can live inland and on the coast.
- (2) Seagulls live and work together to protect eggs and attack predators. They have close family units for their whole lives.
- (3) Student answers will vary.
- (4) Seagull droppings are a problem; the birds also are a problem for airplanes.
- (5) Because they drink both salt and fresh water, the future is positive for the seagull population.

“The Tiger” Comprehension Worksheet #34

- (1) The tiger habitat (forest or jungle) has both light and dark features, matching the stripes.
- (2) Forests and jungle have many rivers; swimming gives tigers a large hunting territory.
- (3) Tigers strangle their prey or knock the prey out with their heavy paws.
- (4) Student answers will vary. Perhaps iguanas, ferrets, and monkeys.
- (5) Successful reintroduction depends on how well the government controls poaching.

“The Vulture” Comprehension Worksheet #35

- (1) Student answers will vary. Raccoons would be a good answer.
- (2) Circling allows vultures to wait until the animal dies; allows them to see nearby predators.
- (3) Vultures clean up many of the dead bodies in the wild.
- (4) As a scavenger, vultures are important parts of nature’s cycle of life; they prevent disease.
- (5) Some cultures fear death more than others, so vultures are feared more in some cultures.

The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Wolf” Comprehension Worksheet #36

- (1) Ability to run fast and for a long time helps them catch prey.
- (2) Wolves do not chase their prey; they also practice “surplus killing.”
- (3) Student answers will vary.
- (4) Howling helps the pack stay together during hunts.
- (5) It will change habitats. Introducing predators will kill other animals, including livestock.

“The X-ray Fish” Comprehension Worksheet #37

- (1) They tolerate different qualities of water; they eat flake fish food; they are interesting.
- (2) They like the middle of any water depth between plants as their territories.
- (3) Fish larger than one inch that don’t eat other fish (herbivores).
- (4) Those that can’t afford the necessary equipment and those that can’t properly care for fish.
- (5) Student answers will vary. All pets require special care (some more than others).

“The Yak” Comprehension Worksheet #38

- (1) Their heart and lungs are large; they have long hair; they stay in their herds.
- (2) Body heat and protection from wind.
- (3) Student answers will vary. Perhaps cows and oxen.
- (4) Hiking, climbing, carrying cargo, and skiing businesses may increase the use of yaks.
- (5) Governments would have to stop the killing of wild yaks and decrease the profit motive.

“The Zebra” Comprehension Worksheet #39

- (1) Zebras need a lot of water; they move from season to season to adjust to water supplies.
- (2) Zebras are grazing animals so they have to move a lot; they are also slow eaters.
- (3) Zebras are very social animals: partners stay together; babies are nursed for one year.
- (4) Student answers will vary.
- (5) Zebra populations may increase as the lion population decreases or becomes extinct.

“The Sheep” Comprehension Worksheet #40

- (1) They raise sheep because sheep have many uses (wool and meat) and are profitable.
- (2) Student answers will vary.
- (3) They need to separate the rams into different areas.
- (4) They could alert the shepherd, or perhaps chase off lone coyotes.
- (5) They can recognize their mates, their babies, their guard animals, and their shepherders.

The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheet Answers

“The Whale” Comprehension Worksheet #41

- (1) Student answers will vary. Perhaps two classrooms.
- (2) Student answers will vary. Perhaps orcas, swallows, or Canadian geese.
- (3) Although humpback mothers are close to their babies, the whales usually swim alone, except sometimes they do hunt together.
- (4) The bubbles may frighten or distract the fish. They may not like to swim through bubbles.
- (5) More humpbacks will probably increase tourism because it will be easier to find these whales.

“The Python” Comprehension Worksheet #42

- (1) For protection against predators and to surprise unsuspecting prey.
- (2) The pythons would not have to eat so often.
- (3) Friction provides warmth; snakes are cold-blooded, so they don't produce body heat.
- (4) They are in the middle of the food chain: they hunt and are hunted.
- (5) Student answers will vary. Perhaps tigers and elephants.

“The Cheetah” Comprehension Worksheet #43

- (1) Cheetahs can chase down prey over short distances.
- (2) They live in Africa and Asia, mostly on the African savannah, but also in mountains and forests.
- (3) They can only run for short distances, so they need to be in the best position possible to begin their chase.
- (4) Male cheetahs live and hunt in groups and have established territories: females do not.
- (5) Reducing the number of predators in their habitats.

