

GRADES 4-ADULT

**FLUENCY &
COMPREHENSION**

READING FLUENCY TOOLKIT

EXPOSITORY ARTICLES

MODELED READ-ALOUDS

3 READING SPEEDS

FLUENCY ARTICLE

TIMING SHEET

FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION PRACTICE
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Reading Fluency and Comprehension Toolkit

*A slice of The Science of
Reading Intervention Program:
Assessment-based Instruction*

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Mark Pennington

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Introduction

The **Reading Fluency and Comprehension Toolkit** is a “slice” of [The Science of Reading Intervention Program](#). This toolkit provides 43 expository **Animal Articles** for fluency and comprehension practice. First, students complete fluency timings and repeated reading practice, along with modeled YouTube readings at their individually-assigned challenge levels (15–20 minutes). Next, students complete vocabulary and comprehension questions on the same article (10 minutes). **Note that the SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets (and answers) follow the Animal Articles formatted for fluency practice.**

In each 350–450 article, 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 formatted as fluency worksheets with word counts and as comprehension worksheets with bolded vocabulary and embedded comprehension questions. (Answers are included at the end of the book.)

Each article is leveled in a pyramid design: the first two paragraphs are at third-grade (Fleish-Kincaid) reading; the next two paragraphs are at fifth-grade reading level; and the last two are at 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. Text size decreases as the reading level increases.

Before starting the **Reading Fluency and Comprehension Toolkit** program, accomplish two tasks:

1. Use the following “Pets” Fluency Assessment to place students in one of three fluency groups.
2. Introduce and practice the SCRIP Comprehension Cues with the 5 think-aloud fairy tales (see pages 53–58).



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The “Pets” Fluency Assessment

The “Pets” fluency passage is leveled in a pyramid design: 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.

Materials/Instructional Setting/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/Grading/Recording

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 to _____.’”

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“Pets” Fluency Assessment

Name _____

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

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Reading Fluency Level Placement Criteria and Preparation

1. Assign students to fluency levels, based upon their scores on the “Pets” Fluency Assessment, to read along with modeled readings at their optimal challenge speeds. Each **Animal Article** on the YouTube videos has been recorded at three different reading speeds.

Assigned Fluency Level	“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

Note that assigned levels need to be adjusted over time. Observe the students’ *cold* read timings on their Animal Articles, but do a quick fluency check of your own before changing levels.

2. Print and distribute the Animal Article Fluency Timing chart that best matches your students’ reading fluency numbers. Write the students’ names and assigned reading fluency levels on the chart. Students will keep the timings chart in a folder or binder.

3. Print the Animal Article back-to-back (the fluency worksheet with word counts and the comprehension worksheet with bolded vocabulary and embedded comprehension questions).

4. Provide pencils and pens for students to record *cold* and *hot* timings.

5. Assign computers or tablets for each student with earbuds and post the following URL on a classroom wall poster: <http://bit.ly/1HnRC3h>. The 129 leveled readings each have YouTube video links.

6. Ready a timer. The stopwatch on your phone works well.

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Reading Fluency Directions

Display an **Animal Article** and the **Animal Article Fluency Timings** chart for reference.

1. Say, “We are going to read part of an article about an animal. Read out loud with expression, pause at commas, and stop at periods. During the timing, don’t skip over words or stop reading because we want our timings to be accurate. Don’t read along with other students. Read at your own pace with six-inch voices. Don’t shout, but don’t whisper. ‘Ready, read.’”
2. Students read the article out loud for the two-minute *cold* timing with six-inch voices. At the end of the two-minute timing say, “Stop and place your finger under the last word you read. Now, find the word count for that line in the left margin and add the number of words you read on that line.”
3. “On your Animal Article Fluency Timings chart, find the column for the Animal Article, and use a pencil to draw a line across the column to show the number total of words you read during the *cold* timing. We call it a *cold* timing because it is unpracticed. Now, quickly and neatly shade in the column below that line.”
4. “Type the link in the browser, and open your assigned A, B, or C level Animal Article video. Make sure your earbuds are plugged in, push “PLAY,” adjust the volume, and skip the ad.
5. Read out loud with the modeled reading over and over until I say, ‘Stop.’ Read with six-inch voices.” I suggest you practice six-inch voices. Make sure that students are not whispering.
6. Monitor the Level A modeled reading, and when students have finished a second read-along, say ‘Stop’ and direct students to log out and practice repeated readings on the print copies. Remind students to read in six-inch voices with expression and attention to punctuation.
7. A few minutes prior to the end of the activity, lead the students in the two-minute *hot* timing of the same Animal Article with six-inch voices. After students determine their word counts, say, “Use a pen to draw a line across the same column to show the number total of words you read during the *hot* timing. We call it a *hot* timing because it is practiced. Now, quickly and neatly shade in the column below that line down to the pencil line. If you read less, simply draw the line.”
8. Direct students to turn in their Animal Articles and put away their timing charts.

Note that students will often inflate their *hot* timing scores. Listen in to students who do so and counsel them to improve 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.

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Name _____

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Animal Article Fluency Timings

Name _____

[illegible]

of Words Read in Two-Minute Timing

Animal Fluency Article

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Name _____

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Animal Article Fluency Timings

Name _____

[illegible]

of Words Read in Two-Minute Timing

Animal Fluency Article

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“The Ape” Reading Fluency #1

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

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“The Eagle” Reading Fluency #2

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

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“The Ibex” Reading Fluency #3

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

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“The Okapi” Reading Fluency #4

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.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
	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	

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“The Mule” Reading Fluency #5

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

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“The Rooster” Reading Fluency #6

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

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

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

8	Koi fish are freshwater fishes and are		
17	kept by many as pets. Koi come in many		
24	different colors. Most of them are orange.		
33	Koi have eyes on both sides of their heads.		
39	Behind their eyes, they have gills.		
46	These gills help them breathe under water.		
53	On their backs, they have a fin.		
65	The koi fish are related to carps. Carps come from the Caspian		
76	Sea in Europe. Colored koi fish were first discovered in Japan.		
88	Today, they live everywhere in the world. They are mostly kept as		
100	pets, but some have been released into the wild. People like keeping		
112	koi because of their bright colors. Many people have built koi ponds		
116	to enjoy these fish.		
128	Koi will eat many different foods if they are available. Koi owners		
142	usually feed them fish food from the store. However, they may feed their fish		
153	with some live foods. These foods include worms, prawns, tadpoles, and frogs.		
167	Some live foods, like insects, are dangerous for koi to eat. Owners can also		
181	feed their koi fish brown bread and lettuce. But, owners need to be careful as		
194	not to harm their fishes with foods that they can't digest.		
206	Sometimes, male koi will bully females. If this happens, an owner must		
221	separate the two. After the babies, called <i>fry</i> , are born, they will find a place to		
236	hide. After two or three days of growing, the newborn koi fish will start		
252	swimming up to the surface of the water. The fry need to be fed and treated		
260	differently by their owner to help their growth.		
277	Koi require a constant, good filtration system for the water in which they swim and live. Adding		
297	simple tap water to their habitat could even kill the fish. Tap water is filled with chlorine and other chemicals		
316	that may have negative effects on koi fish. Koi habitats must have water that has the right texture (hardness or		
331	softness), temperature, sunshine, and chemicals. It is recommended that new koi owners read information		
343	about creating a home for their fishes before bringing their fish home.		
358	Since koi are domesticated water animals, they are not threatened by extinction. The population of koi		
376	in the world is increasing steadily as the demand for these beautiful colored fishes grows. Humans have		
393	destroyed some koi that have been released into the wild, because they pollute the water around them, making		
410	it undesirable for livestock. However, large amounts of money have been spent to try to destroy these wild		
422	populations of koi, and those operations have been largely unsuccessful.		
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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	The ermine is also called the short-tailed	ermine
16	weasel. Ermines weigh less than one pound. In the	stomachs
24	summer, their coats are brown. Their stomachs are	carnivores
33	white. But, when it turns cold, their coats turn	purity
41	white. Ermines have long necks and bodies, but	mink
49	short legs. Their heads are shaped like triangles	
53	with two pink ears.	
60	Ermines live in Canada, Alaska, Europe, and	
74	Asia. They like to live in cold places. Ermines find rocks to live by.	
87	They make lots of homes in between the rocks. In fall, ermines shed	
100	their brown coats. Their white coats let them match the snow in the	
110	winter. If they cannot be seen, they cannot be eaten!	
121	Ermines are carnivores. Mostly, they eat rabbits. With their sharp teeth,	
136	they are able to catch prey much bigger than themselves. But, they also like to	
149	eat rodents and small insects. During wintertime, ermines will use their sharp	
164	claws to dig under snow. Under the snow, they can often find food to eat. They	
173	also use their claws for burying their food.	
185	Male ermines become adults at one year of age. Females become adults	
199	much faster, at only two months of age. Females have ten to thirteen babies	
214	every year. Baby ermines weigh only about as much as a coin! At eight weeks	
228	of age, the mother teaches them how to hunt. After that, females leave their	
241	mothers. Males stay with their mothers until the next spring. Males never help	
256	raise any of the babies. Ermines live for about four to seven years. They live,	
268	eat, and hunt on their own. However, they sometimes communicate with each	
278	other through scents. Ermines have an excellent sense of smell.	
296	In colonial history, ermines were once used as furs for coats. The Kings and Queens of England often	
316	wore ermine on their robes. The ermine was known as a symbol of purity in Europe, because of its bright	
336	white color. Ermine fur was only harvested in the winter, when the ermine was totally white and had shed its	
355	brown coat from summer. Even today, in some areas of Japan, the ermine is considered a symbol of good luck,	
361	because of its friendly appearance.	
381	Today, ermine fur is still popular. In some countries, an ermine coat is just as prized as is a mink coat.	
400	Ermines are not close to extinction. The Endangered Species List rates them as “not a concern.” In fact, they	
413	spread quite quickly and ermines are even overpopulated in parts of Europe.	
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“The Armadillo” Reading Fluency #12

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

8	The orca is also called the <i>killer whale</i> .		
17	An orca is a black and white dolphin. Orcas	octopuses	
25	have white chests and sides. They also have	throughout	
34	white spots above their eyes. The rest of the	commercial	
45	body is black. Each orca has a large fin on its	trainability	
53	back. Orcas are very large. One killer whale		
67	can be as long as two cars! Their great size makes 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.		
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“The Anteater” Reading Fluency #14

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

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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.		
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“The Iguana” Reading Fluency #16

7	Iguanas are types of lizards. They are	iguanas
15	about five feet long with their tails. These	burrows
21	animals are green or grayish-green. Their	exotic
29	skin is rough. They have plenty of bumps	altogether
36	on their backs. Green iguanas have long	
44	fingers and claws to help them climb. These	
56	animals look heavy, but they are not. They are quite fast.	
61	Their teeth are sharp and strong.	
71	These iguanas are mainly from South America. But, they also	
83	can be found in Mexico and Florida. They usually live near water,	
98	and they often climb in trees. They can fall from the top of a very tall	
110	tree and land without being hurt. Green iguanas use their claws to	
114	hook onto trees.	
125	Green iguanas are mainly <i>herbivores</i> . They feed on flowers, leaves, and	
139	fruits. The plum is one of the favorite foods of the green iguana. Although	
152	green iguanas mainly eat plants, they also have been seen eating mice, dead	
166	fish, and insects. Some wild green iguanas have even been known to eat bird	
176	eggs. Baby iguanas have a different diet than full-grown iguanas.	
188	Iguanas usually prefer to live alone. However, they can be found living in	
203	groups in sunny areas. Green iguanas lay about fifty eggs at a time. They lay	
219	all their eggs in a hole they dig in the ground called a <i>burrow</i> . Sometimes, they	
232	dig more burrows than they use to trick animals that may want to eat their	
247	eggs. After a female iguana lays her eggs, she never returns to the hole. The	
261	eggs hatch by themselves, and the babies will grow up without parents. Only	
272	about five iguanas survive each batch of eggs.	
290	Many people in the United States and Mexico want to have iguanas for pets, but iguanas are difficult to	
309	keep and care for. These animals are considered to be <i>exotic</i> pets, because they are unusual and require special	
324	treatment. Because of increasing demand, hunting for iguanas can be very profitable, though some states	
341	prohibit iguana hunting altogether. Now, more and more iguanas are being raised on iguana farms to sell as	
344	pets.	
360	In South America, some people have other uses for iguanas. These people, mostly living in remote	
376	rainforest locations, actually eat green iguanas. Those that eat these lizards refer to iguanas as “bamboo	
394	chickens” or “chickens of the trees.” However, iguanas are not part of the normal diet in most South American	
406	households. The overall green iguana population is healthy and in balance.	
	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.		
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	The umbrella bird does not carry an		
15	umbrella. It does live in the rainforests. This	umbrella	
24	bird gets its name from its head feathers. These	wattle	
33	feathers face forward and cover its face like an	noisiest	
40	umbrella. Umbrella birds are about twelve to	diminishing	
43	eighteen inches long.		
52	They also have a long piece of skin called		
64	a <i>wattle</i> that hangs down from their necks. Turkeys have wattles like		
75	these. But, umbrella birds have even bigger ones. Some of these		
89	wattles are as long as the birds. It’s amazing that the birds do not		
100	lose their balance when standing on the branches. The wattles help		
112	them chirp very loudly. In fact, umbrella birds are some of the		
117	noisiest birds in the rainforests.		
129	Most umbrella birds live in Central America and in the northern areas of		
142	South America. They stay in the mountains when they are having babies. They		
156	live in the tropical rainforest lowlands the rest of the time. They make their		
171	homes in the tallest trees. This is where most of the sunlight is found.		
182	Umbrella birds are <i>omnivores</i> , so they eat both meat and plants.		
196	Umbrella birds move up and down the trees of the rainforest looking for prey.		
211	Once they find an animal or large insect, they grab it with their beaks. Then,		
226	they knock it out by slamming it against a tree branch. Finally, they eat it.		
240	Umbrella birds will eat frogs, lizards, and small rodents. They also like to eat		
241	fruit.		
261	Males look for female mates in an interesting way. They sit up in a tree all day long. While they sit,		
283	they use their wattles to make a loud sound. It sounds like someone banging on a big metal trash can. The		
304	females can hear this sound throughout the forest. If they are looking for a mate, they can follow the sound to		
318	where the males are sitting. Then, the female picks which male it likes best.		
333	Umbrella birds are in danger of extinction because their habitat is rapidly diminishing. Forests are		
351	being quickly cleared out in Central America and in northern South America to plant crops or graze livestock.		
369	The actions that people take to expand farmland or get more grazing land affect other animals and their		
382	habitats. It would certainly be a shame to lose these interesting umbrella birds.		
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“The Bear” Reading Fluency #19

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

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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.”
 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“The Mouse” Reading Fluency #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.

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“The Newt” Reading Fluency #29

7	The newt looks like a cross between		
15	a lizard and a frog. Newts are <i>amphibians</i> .	amphibians	
23	They spend some of their lives in water	salamander	
32	and some out of water. Newts are part of	contributed	
39	the salamander family. They are dry and	pesticides	
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 new 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.		
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“The Pig” Reading Fluency #30

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	religions	
30	hair all over. Their heads are big and they have	sauage	
39	noses called <i>snouts</i> . Pigs have sharp teeth. Two of	auktion	
49	the teeth are called <i>tusks</i> . Pigs have four toes on	aggressive	
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.		
	Total Number of Words Read	Total Number of Words Read	
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“The Quail” Reading Fluency #31

10	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.	pheasant coveys surrounding	
17			
25			
34			
42	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.		
50			
62			
74			
88	Quail like 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.		
102			
104			
117			
131	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.		
144			
159			
174			
189	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 quail 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.		
203			
213			
227			
241	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.		
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“The Raccoon” Reading Fluency #32

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

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	protective	
38	bird that we often see at the beach. Seagulls	colonies	
46	are medium to large birds. They are usually	cigarette	
54	gray or white with some black color. They	individual	
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 sandy, 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.		
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“The Tiger” Reading Fluency #34

8	Tigers are the largest cats in the wild.		
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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**Vietnam
crocodiles
challenge
reintroducing**

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“The Vulture” Reading Fluency #35

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“The Yak” Reading Fluency #38

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

**Himalaya
Tibetans
tourism
uncertain**

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“The Zebra” Reading Fluency #39

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

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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	

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“The Whale” Reading Fluency #41

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

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“The Python” Reading Fluency #42

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

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“The Sheep” Reading Fluency #43

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

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The SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets

The five SCRIP Comprehension Cues help readers learn how to interactively read both narrative and expository text. The SCRIP acronym stands for Summarize, Connect, Re-think, Interpret, and Predict. All five SCRIP cues are reinforced in each of the 43 SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets.

These brief high-interest expository articles describe the key features, life cycle, and habitat of animals, and provide interesting facts about each animal's role within its own ecosystem. Practicing expository passages, rather than narrative passages, better prepares students for academic reading and standardized tests.

Each article is leveled in a pyramid design: the first two paragraphs are at third-grade (Fleish-Kincaid) reading; the next two paragraphs are at fifth-grade reading level; and the last two are at 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. Text size decreases as the reading level increases.

The **SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets** each have five questions—one question for each of the five strategies. 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**. The teacher should define the vocabulary words prior to reading.

Before Using the SCRIP Comprehension Worksheets: Think-Alouds

Teach and model the five cueing strategies, referencing the SCRIP Comprehension Cues Posters (pages 59–63). Start with the Summarize strategy and do a “Think-Aloud” on the narrative “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” An effective “Think-Aloud” involves reading the passage out loud and pausing frequently to interact with the text. Limit your interactions to the focus comprehension strategy. Continue to teach the remaining four strategies in the same manner. Reference the answer key for possible answers for each of these narrative passages.

Use the following narrative models: Summarize—“The Boy Who Cried Wolf”; Connect—“Hansel and Grettel”; Re-think—“Little Red Riding Hood”; Interpret—“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”; and Predict—“The Three Little Pigs” to introduce each strategy.

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"The Boy Who Cried Wolf"

There once was a naughty shepherd boy who lived in a small village. One day this boy was sitting at the top of a hill and was very bored. As he watched the sheep under his care, he came up with an idea to entertain himself. He turned in the direction of the village and at the top of his lungs he began screaming, "Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is after the sheep!"

The villagers immediately left their business and came running up the hill to help the boy scare the wolf away. But when they made it to the top of the hill, they found no wolf. Instead, they found the naughty boy laughing at the joke that he played on them.

"Never cry 'wolf,' shepherd boy," **scolded** the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went back to the village very angry.

The very next day, the naughty boy was bored again. "I wonder if the trick will work again" he thought. He went up to the top of the hill, turned toward the village, and once again screamed, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is after the sheep!" Once again, he howled with laughter as he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him scare the wolf away.

When the villagers again found no wolf, they scolded the boy once more saying, "Save your screaming for when there really is something wrong. Don't ever cry 'wolf' when there is no wolf!" But the boy just laughed and watched them go down the hill to the village once more.

The next day, the naughty shepherd boy was again very bored. As he was dreaming up more mischief, he heard the bleating of his sheep. He ran toward the sound and then he saw what caused the sheep to cry. A huge wolf was **proving** about his flock of sheep. Once again, he ran to the top of the hill and shouted, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is after the sheep!"

But the villagers had learned their lesson. They all said, "There goes that naughty shepherd boy playing his games once again." So, the villagers didn't come. At sunset, some of the villagers wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't yet brought the sheep down to the village. They went up the hill to find the boy. They found him with his head down crying. Then they found out why he was crying. The flock was **scattered** everywhere, and two sheep were dead.

"I cried out, 'Wolf!' Why didn't you help me?"

An old man responded, "That's what happens to those who lie. Sooner or later, no one believes them."

Summarize



(1) Summarize why the boy lied.

Summarize



(2) Summarize how the villagers responded to the boy's lies.

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“Hansel and Gretel”

Once there lived a poor woodcutter with his two children and their stepmother. The boy was named Hansel, and the girl was named Gretel. There was a severe **famine** in the land and the family was starving. Desperate, the stepmother said out loud to herself, “The children must go, else all of us will die of starvation.”

The children were so hungry that they had not been able to sleep, and they had heard their stepmother.

At sunrise, the stepmother woke the two children, saying, “Get up, we are going into the forest to gather wood.” She gave them each a bit of bread and said: “That’s all we have. Save it for your lunch.”

The stepmother led the children deep into the forest. Seeing her plan, Hansel dropped a small crumb of bread every few minutes, so that they could find their way home. Once they were completely lost, the stepmother ran away, leaving Hansel and Gretel alone.

“Don’t worry, Gretel,” said Hansel. “I have left a path to guide us back home. We will wait until father gets home and follow the trail by moonlight.”

Unfortunately, a flock of birds found and ate the trail of breadcrumbs. Now, the children really were lost. Looking for water, the children saw a lighted **cottage**. They knocked on the door and an old woman welcomed them in to eat. She told them that she would help them go home the next day. She gave Hansel his own room and had Gretel sleep in the kitchen.

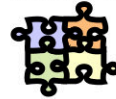
However, in the morning, they found the door to Hansel’s room locked. The old woman said, “I’ve been hungry, too. Last night, I fed you the last of my food. Now, you two will be my next meal!”

The old woman built a fire in her huge bread oven. Then, she told Gretel to open the oven door. But Gretel said, “The door is too heavy for me to open.”

As the old woman opened the door, Gretel gave her a shove into the oven. She shut the iron door and drew the bolt. How the old woman screamed! Gretel found an axe and broke the lock to Hansel’s room. As the children were leaving, Hansel caught a **glint** of light from something in a black pot by the door. The pot was full of precious **rubies**! Taking the jewels, they ran out into the woods. But then, Hansel saw a bread crumb. The birds had not found all of them! The children followed the bread crumb trail back to their home.

Their father greeted them with a hug and said, “Your stepmother told me what she did, and she left.” The children showed their father the rubies and told their story. The family of three lived happily ever after.

Connect



(1) What other stories feature a forest as a dangerous setting?

Connect



(2) What other stories have an old woman as an evil character?

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“Little Red Riding Hood”

There was once was a little girl who lived with her father and mother in a house at the edge of a forest. In the same forest, her grandmother also **resided**. Her grandmother had given her a long red hooded coat which she wore so much that everyone called her Little Red Riding Hood.

One morning Little Red Riding Hood's mother said, "Put on your coat and take this basket of cookies to your sick grandmother."

As Little Red Riding Hood was walking in the forest, a voice from behind said, "What have you in that basket, Little Red Riding Hood?" The girl turned around and saw a great big wolf.

"I have cookies for my **ailing** grandmother," she said.

"Ah... I know where she lives," the wolf said. "I hope she enjoys them." Then, the wolf ran into the forest toward the grandmother's house. He soon arrived and knocked at the door of her house.

"Who is there?" called the grandmother from her bed.

"Little Red Riding Hood," said the wolf in a girlish voice.

"Just open the door and come right on in."

The wolf opened the door and **pounced** on the bed, eating the grandmother up in one big bite. The wolf then put on the grandmother's headscarf.

Soon afterwards, Little Red Riding Hood walked into the house saying, "Good morning, Grandmother, I brought you a basket of cookies." As she came close to the bed she said, "What big ears you have, Grandmother."

"All the better to hear you with, my dear."

"What big eyes you have, Grandmother."

"All the better to see you with, my dear."

"What a big nose you have."

"All the better to smell you with, my dear."

"But, Grandmother, what a big mouth you have."

"All the better to eat you up, my dear," screamed the wolf as he sprang at Little Red Riding Hood. Just at that moment, the woodcutter was passing the house, and he heard the scream. He rushed in and with his axe chopped off the wolf's head.

The woodcutter carried Little Red Riding Hood back home. Everyone was happy that she had escaped the wolf. But they were sad that the wolf had eaten her grandmother.

Re-think



(1) Why didn't the wolf eat Little Red Riding Hood right there in the forest?

Re-think



(2) Why might the grandmother have been tricked by the wolf?

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“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”

Once there was a little girl named Goldilocks. One day she went for a **stroll** in the forest. Soon, she came upon a house. She knocked and, when no one answered, she walked right into the house.

On the kitchen table, there were three bowls of **porridge**. Hungry, Goldilocks tasted the first bowl.

"This porridge is too hot!" she shouted. So, she tasted the porridge from the second bowl.

"This porridge is too cold," she said. So, she tasted the third bowl of porridge.

"Ahhh, this porridge is just right," she said and she ate the whole bowl.

After she'd eaten the porridge, she immediately felt **exhausted**. So, she walked into the big room and saw three chairs. Goldilocks sat down in the first one.

"This chair is too big!" she sighed. Then she sat in the second chair.

"This chair is also too big!" she complained. Then she tried the third chair.

"Ahhh, this chair is just right," she said. But just as she sat down in the chair, it broke into pieces.

Goldilocks was very tired, so she went into the bedroom. She lay in the first bed, but it was too hard. She lay in the second bed, but it was too soft. Finally, she lay down in the third bed and it was just right. Then, she fell asleep. Soon, the three bears came home.

"Someone's been eating my porridge," said the papa bear.

"Someone's been eating my porridge," said the mama bear.

"Someone's been eating my porridge, and they ate it all up!" cried the baby bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair," growled the papa bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair," said the mama bear.

"Someone's been sitting in my chair and it's all broken," cried the baby bear.

They went upstairs to the bedroom and the papa bear growled, "Someone's been sleeping in my bed."

"Someone's been sleeping in my bed, too," said the mama bear.

"Someone's been sleeping in my bed and she's still there!" exclaimed baby bear.

Just then, Goldilocks woke up and saw the three bears. She screamed, jumped up, and ran out of the room. Goldilocks ran down the stairs and out the door. Goldilocks never

Interpret



(1) Why would three bowls of porridge be left out on the table?

Interpret



(2) In the story, why does Goldilocks only like or use the things of the baby bear?

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“The Three Little Pigs”

Once upon a time there lived three little pigs. The first little pig was very lazy. He made his house out of straw. The second little pig was almost as lazy. He made his house out of sticks. The third little pig was not lazy. He was smart. This third little pig worked long hours to build a house completely out of brick.

One day, a wolf came into the pigs’ neighborhood. Smelling fresh **pork**, the wolf went up to the first pig’s house. He banged on the door and said, “Little pig, little pig. Let me in!”

“Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,” **retorted** the first little pig.

“Then, I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your straw house down!” And he did so. But, as the house fell down, the first little pig escaped to the second pig’s house.

The hungry wolf next went up to the second pig’s house. He banged on the door and said, “Little pig, little pig. Let me in!”

“Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,” responded the second little pig.

“Then, I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your stick house down!” And he did so. But, as the house fell down, the first and second little pigs escaped to the third pig’s house.

The very hungry wolf went up to the third pig’s house. He banged on the door and said, “Little pig, little pig. Let me in!”

“Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,” responded the third little pig.

“Then, I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your brick house down!” said the hungry wolf. But as much as he tried, the wolf could not blow the brick house down. So, the **famished** wolf climbed up the roof and jumped down the chimney.

Inside, the smart third little pig had been thinking. He knew that the wolf would not be able to get into the house any other way than through the chimney. So, he built a fire in the fireplace and boiled a huge pot of water.

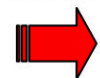
The wolf slid right down into that boiling pot of water, and the three little pigs were saved.

Predict



(1) To where will the first and second little pigs escape?

Predict

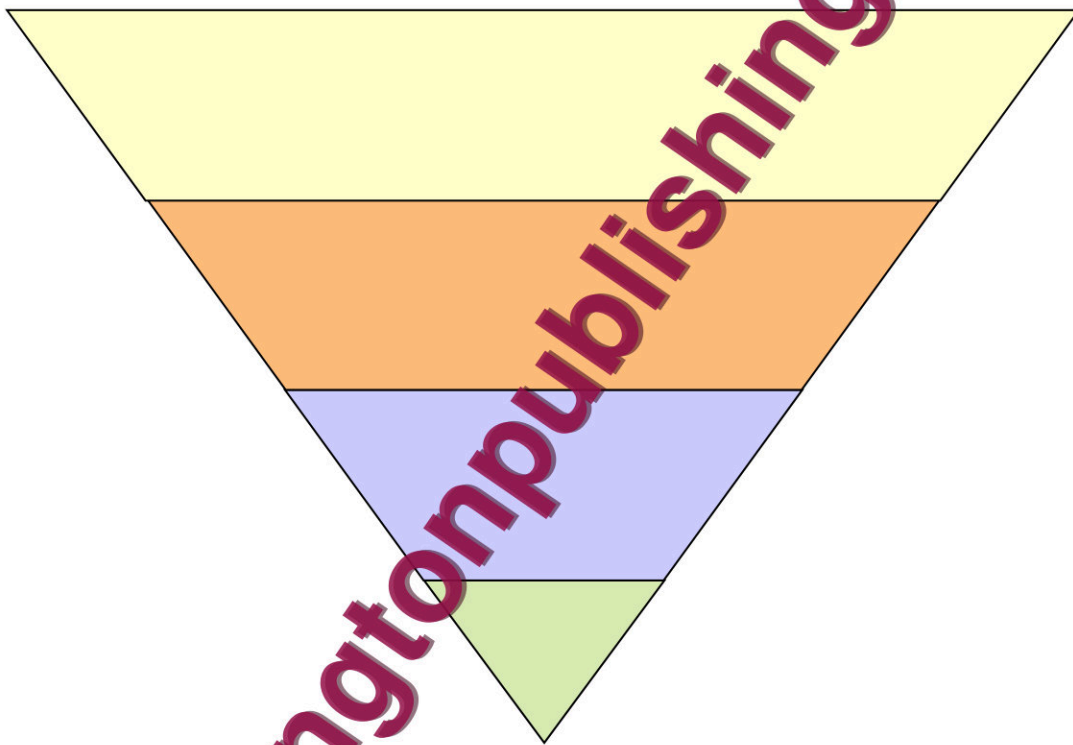


(2) What will happen at the third pig’s brick house?

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Summarize

- ☑ Put the big idea and key details into your own words.



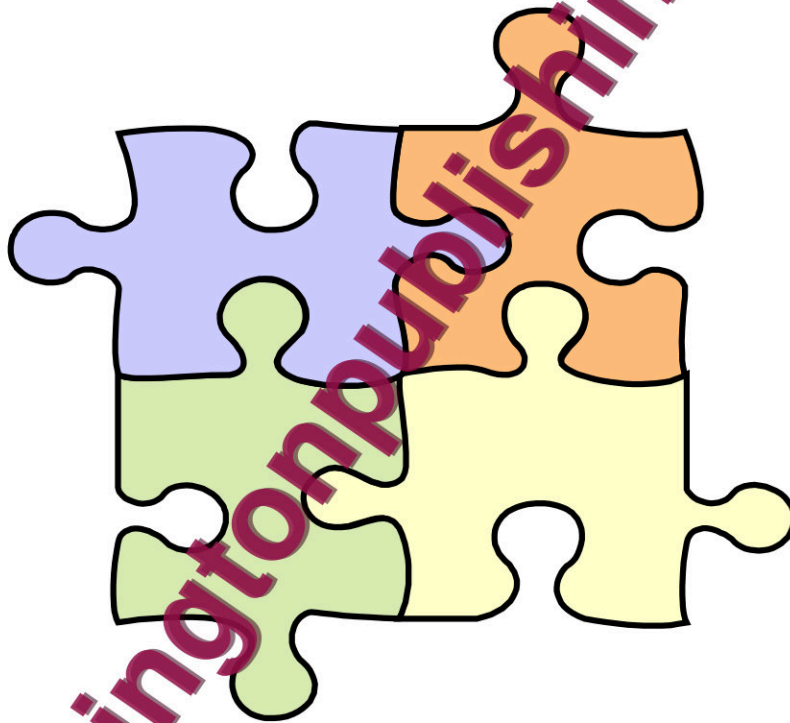
Narrative—Tell *Who, What Happened, Where, and When*

Expository—Tell *Who, What, Where, When, and How*

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Connect

- ☑ Note transition words and relate one part of the text to another.
- ☑ Activate your prior knowledge.



Narrative—Tell how a character, setting, or plot element relates to a previous section of the story.

Expository—Brainstorm what you already know about the topic.

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Re-think

- ☑ Re-read and visualize to clarify meaning, and ask questions about the reading.
- ☑ Examine what the author says in a different way or from another point of view.



Narrative—Tell how a character, setting, or the plot has changed.

Expository—Tell how viewpoints or ideas compare to or refer to others

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Interpret

- ☑ Decide what the author means, and judge how, where, when, or why it was said and by whom.
- ☑ Draw a conclusion about what the author implies (suggests).



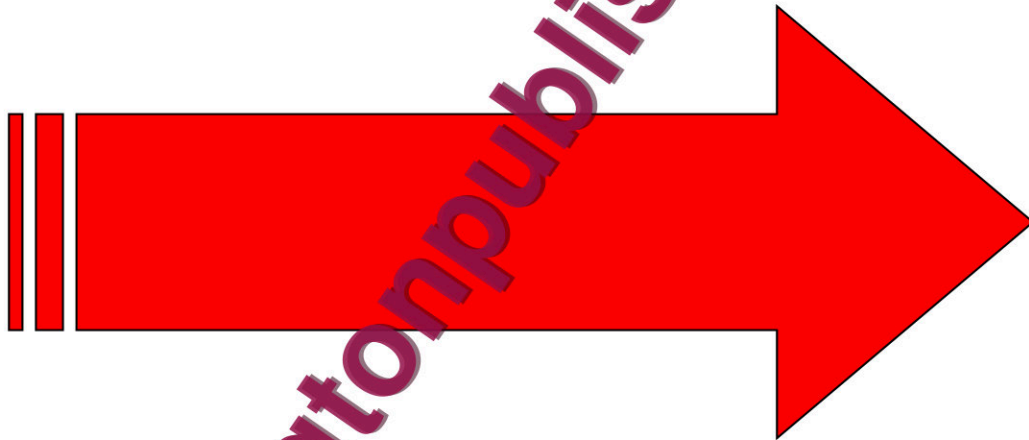
Narrative—Tell what a change in character or plot development means.

Expository—Tell how the author explains the topic or answers the question.

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Predict

✓ Based upon what has happened or what has been said, guess what will happen or what the author will say next.



Narrative—Tell how the plot will advance next or how a character will change. Confirm your predictions.

Expository—Tell what information or evidence the author should present next. Confirm your predictions.

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“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



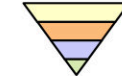
(1) Why has the habitat of orangutans decreased?

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?

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“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. The 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



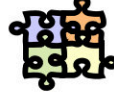
(1) Why might bald eagles move their nests so often?

Re-think



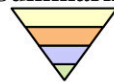
(2) Why might eagles be poor swimmers?

Connect



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

Summarize



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

Predict



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“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?

(4) Why do ibexes separate into two groups?

Predict



(5) Summarize why ibexes were hunted so often.

Summarize



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“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



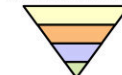
(3) Why don't scientists know how long they live in the wild?

Re-think



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

Summarize



(5) Summarize the reasons the okapi is threatened.

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“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 female 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?

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

Interpret



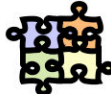
(3) How would mule owners need to plan ahead for additional mules?

Re-think



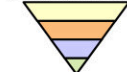
(4) Why do mules respond as they do to the different ways in which they are treated?

Connect



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

Summarize



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“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?

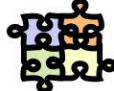
(2) Why would roosters that feed themselves need a lot of room?

Re-think



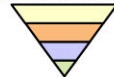
(3) What other animals fight for leadership of their group?

Connect



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

Summarize



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

Predict



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“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



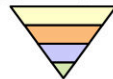
(1) Why aren't woodpeckers found in Australia?

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.

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

Connect



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

Predict



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“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.

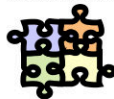
Cows on farms are fed based on their use. Beef cows are fed differently from dairy cows. A beef cow is fed corn, grain, and grasses. Farmers feed these cows a large amount of protein. Dairy cows need large amounts of fiber. Dairy cows provide milk and cream. Cows have very large stomachs that are divided 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 more 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?

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

(4) Summarize the difficulties in raising cows.

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

Re-think



Summarize



Predict



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“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



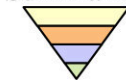
(2) What problems might result by releasing koi fish into the wild?

Re-think



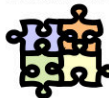
(3) What special equipment would be necessary to raise both male and female koi?

Summarize



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

Connect



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

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“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?

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

Interpret



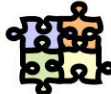
(3) How is the element of surprise the red-tail hawk's greatest hunting strategy?

Re-think



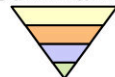
(4) What other animals are used to hunt?

Connect



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

Summarize



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"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 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



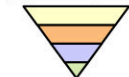
(1) Why might the ermine coats turn white in the winter?

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?

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"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



Summarize



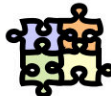
Predict



Interpret



Connect



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

(2) Summarize the importance of the armadillo claws.

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

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

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

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“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.

(1) Why do the orcas swim so far?

(2) What other animals hunt in packs?

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

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

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

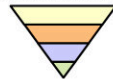
Re-think



Connect



Summarize



Interpret



Predict



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"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?

(2) How would rocks help break down food?

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

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

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

Rethink



Interpret



Summarize



Connect



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"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?

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"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.

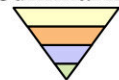
Green iguanas are mainly *herbivores*. They feed on flowers, leaves, and fruits. The plum is one of the favorite foods of the green iguana. Although green iguanas mainly eat plants, they also have been seen eating mice, dead fish, and insects. Some wild green iguanas have even been known to eat bird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

(2) What other animals are good tree climbers?

Connect



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

Re-think



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

Predict



(5) Why are iguana farms increasing in number?

Interpret



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“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. River 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 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.

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

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

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

(5) What will happen to the otter?

Make a connection



Interpret



Connect



Predict



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"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 beak. 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 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.

Re-think



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

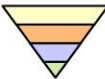
(2) Why would umbrella birds move to the mountains to have babies?

Interpret



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

Summarize



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

Connect



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

Predict



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"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?

(2) Summarize the brown bear's diet.

(3) How do mother bears train their cubs?

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

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

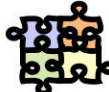
Summarize



Re-think



Connect



Interpret



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“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.

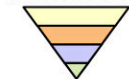
Camels can last an entire week without eating food or drinking water! Camel owners will feed them grass, grains, wheat, and oats. The camels slowly digest their food. They spit it up and chew it again. Although many people think that camels store water in their humps, this is not true. The humps are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

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

Re-think

Connect



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

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

Interpret



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

Predict



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“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.

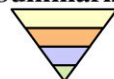
Unlike most *carnivores*, dogs don’t just eat meat. Besides meat, they eat vegetables, grains, eggs, and even milk. Some human food, however, is very dangerous to dogs. Chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins, and some nuts can hurt dogs. Some plants and flowers also can be dangerous to dogs. Dog owners must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



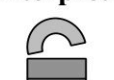
(1) Summarize how people use dogs.

Re-think



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

Interpret



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

Connect



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

Predict



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“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



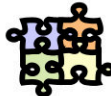
(2) Explain how red foxes are very independent.

Interpret



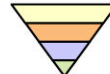
(3) What makes foxes such good hunters?

Connect



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

Summarize



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

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“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 in areas where there is no 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



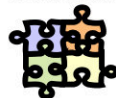
(1) Why would Canadian geese fly in a V-shape wedge?

Interpret



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

Connect



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

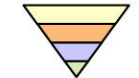
Predict



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

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

Summarize



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"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.

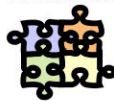
Wild horses, also called *mustangs*, live in the Western United States, Western Canada, and parts of Southern China. Most wild horses live on wide, open grasslands and eat grass, flowers, and other plants. Other wild horses live in forests. In the winter, when grass is not available, they will eat the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

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

Interpret



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“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?

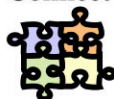
Interpret



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

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

Connect



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

Predict



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"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.

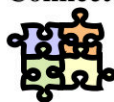
Like cows, kangaroos must eat their food, spit it back up, and then eat it again before they can store it. Some kangaroos graze at night, while others graze during the middle of the day. Kangaroos mostly eat grass and leaves. If they can find green plants that are not dead, they do not need to drink 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?

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"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.

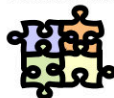
In the wild, lions eat mainly large animals. They like to eat zebras, buffaloes, and even elephants. Sometimes, they eat smaller animals or reptiles as well. They even might attack livestock (cows) in villages for food. Often, lions will steal food from hyenas and leopards, after those animals kill their 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



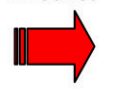
(1) What other animals have manes?

Make think



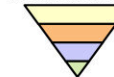
(2) Why won't male lions hunt if they have female mates?

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?

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“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?

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"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 newt 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



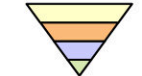
(2) How are newts similar to frogs?

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.

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“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. “Boo” has starred in movies by the same name. The pig has been 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?

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

(3) What happens to pigs sold at auction?

Connect



Re-think



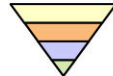
(4) Why would people want pot-bellied pigs as pets?

(5) Summarize the cultural importance of pigs.

Predict



Summarize



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“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 hats. 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

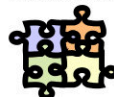


(4) Predict the future of quails raised for food.

(5) What other birds are hunted?

__P__

Connect



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"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 during 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 of 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 alert and can wake up quickly if predators come to attack.

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 pests?

(2) What other animals are scavengers?

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

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

(5) What might influence raccoon hunting?

Connect



Re-think



Summarize



Interpret



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“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 15 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 engine.

Re-think



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

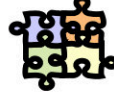
(2) Summarize the relationships of seagulls within their colonies.

Summarize



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

Connect



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

Interpret



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

Predict



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"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 its surroundings?

Interpret



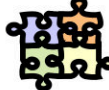
(2) Why would the tiger's ability to swim be important?

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?

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“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 bones. 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



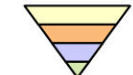
(1) What other animals are scavengers?

Re-think



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

Summarize



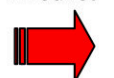
(3) Summarize the important role of the vulture.

Interpret



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

Predict



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"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?

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“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?

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

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

Summarize



Re-think



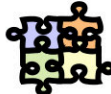
(4) Who should not keep fish as pets?

Interpret



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

Connect



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"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.

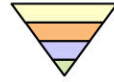
Yaks like to stay in a group, called a **herd**. A yak herd has from ten to thirty animals. Yaks will huddle together on cold winter nights or during snowstorms to keep warm. Yak females are pregnant for nine months, just like human mothers. The average lifespan of a yak is about twenty years.

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 large. 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?

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“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.

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

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

(3) Summarize their pack and family relationships.

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

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

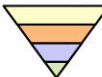
Re-think



Interpret



Summarize



Connect



Predict



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“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.

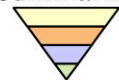
Sheep are *herbivores*. This means that they only eat plants. They usually eat grass, leaves, and stems. Often, when sheep eat their food, they will spit it out and re-chew it like cows. Sheep spend most of their day **grazing** (finding food). They prefer shorter grasses to longer ones. The best land 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 effective sheepherders. 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?

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"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.

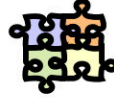
Humpback whales are mammals, so they have live births. The baby whales are called *calves*. Mother whales are very protective of their calves and will sometimes attack boats that get too close to their babies. Once calves leave their mothers, they like stay by themselves. Humpback whales will group for 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 **breeching**. They can also blow water 10 to 15 feet in the air. They also sing very

Connect



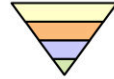
(1) Compare the length of the largest whale to something at school.

Re-think



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

Summarize



(3) Summarize humpback family relationships.

(4) How would bubbles trap the fish?

Interpret



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

Predict



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“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?

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“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?

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The SCRIIP 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.

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“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.

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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.

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The SCRIIP 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 saltwater 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 hump 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.

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The SCRIIP 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.

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The SCRIIP 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.

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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 over 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.

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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 sheepherder, or perhaps chase off lone coyotes.
- (5) They can recognize their mates, their babies, their guard animals, and their sheepherders.

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The SCRIIP 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 savanna, 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.

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SCRIP Comprehension Cues

Summarize

- ☑ Put the big idea into a smaller one.
- ☑ Put the main idea and key details into your own words.

Connect

- ☑ Think about how the reading relates to other reading.
- ☑ Visualize what's going on in the reading.

Re-think

- ☑ Re-read for better understanding or look at what is said in a different way.
- ☑ Ask questions or make comments about the reading.

Interpret

- ☑ Think about what the author really means.
- ☑ Draw a conclusion or figure out what is implied (suggested).

Predict

- ☑ Based upon what has happened or what has been said, guess what will happen or what the text will say next.

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