2D READING AND VOCABULARY

1 **Match sentences 1–4 about four different animals with *pictures* A–D.**

1 ☐ It is made angry by the colour red.
2 ☐ It buries its head in the sand when it is afraid.
3 ☐ It can only remember things for a few seconds.
4 ☐ It becomes two living creatures if cut in half.

2 **Which of the sentences in Exercise 1 do you think is true? Read the article quickly and check your ideas.**

3 **Read the article again and match questions 1–10 with paragraphs A–E. Each paragraph may be chosen more than once.**

Which paragraph ...

1 ☐ contains good news for animals that might be hunted by a particular predator?
2 ☐ explains why a type of animal is not eaten as some people believe.
3 ☐ reveals that a particular animal's eyesight is more sensitive than is often believed.
4 ☐ suggests ancient origins for a particular myth.
5 ☐ mentions an important brain function that lasts much longer than commonly thought.
6 ☐ explains that a certain animal suffers from some vision deficiency but otherwise its eyesight is fine.
7 ☐ suggests that a particular truth will be a relief to a lot of people.
8 ☐ mentions a myth linked to the desire to avoid being seen by predators.
9 ☐ gives a specific example of an idiom in the context of the writer's family.
10 ☐ mentions a feeding behaviour that is often misinterpreted as an attack on a human.

Vocabulary extension

4 **Match the highlighted words and phrases from the text with the definitions.**

1 Not being able to fly. *flightless*
2 Hard pointed parts of an animal's head. _____
3 A way of navigating using sound. _____
4 An animal eaten by another animal. _____
5 Move quietly along the ground. _____
6 The ability to see well at night. _____

5 **Complete the sentences with the correct forms of the words from Exercise 4.**

1 My little brother screamed when he saw a spider *creeping* out of the fruit bowl.
2 African buffalos are unusual because both males and females grow _____ on their heads.
3 As well as bats, marine animals such as dolphins and whales use _____ to help them navigate.
4 Penguins are _____ and have flippers.
5 Owls have extremely light-sensitive eyes and therefore excellent _____.
6 The leopard seal's most common _____ are squid and fish, but they eat penguins too.

ACTIVE VOCABULARY | Idioms with animals

In English, there are many common idioms that feature animals. In some cases, meaning can be guessed if you are aware of a particular animal's behaviour, e.g.:

the ***lion's share*** *of something* = the largest portion/amount of something (when lions eat their prey, they leave very little for other animals).

6 **Complete the sentences including animal idioms with the words from the box. Use the information in brackets to help you.**

bird butterflies dog hawk horses ~~snail~~ wolf

1 The roads were so busy that the traffic was going **at a *snail's*** pace (very slowly – *it took us two hours* to get home!
2 Afraid that the children might hurt themselves while playing, the new kindergarten teacher watched **them like a** _____ (watched them very carefully) during break time.
3 Just **hold your** _____ (wait) before you go rushing off. Have you packed everything you need?
4 **A little** _____ **told me** (I don't want to say who it was) that you've bought us tickets for a concert for my birthday. Is it true?
5 I **had** _____ **in my stomach** (I was nervous) before my English exam.
6 Be careful – the new manager looks nice and friendly, but she's actually **a** _____ **in sheep's clothing** (more dangerous than she seems) and is very strict.
7 With far fewer jobs available than there are graduates, the post-graduate job market is **a dog eat** _____ **world** (it's very competitive).

7 ON A HIGH NOTE **If you could have the powers of any animal, which would you choose and why? Write a paragraph giving your reasons.**



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LIVEWORKSHEETS

ANIMAL MYTHS

02

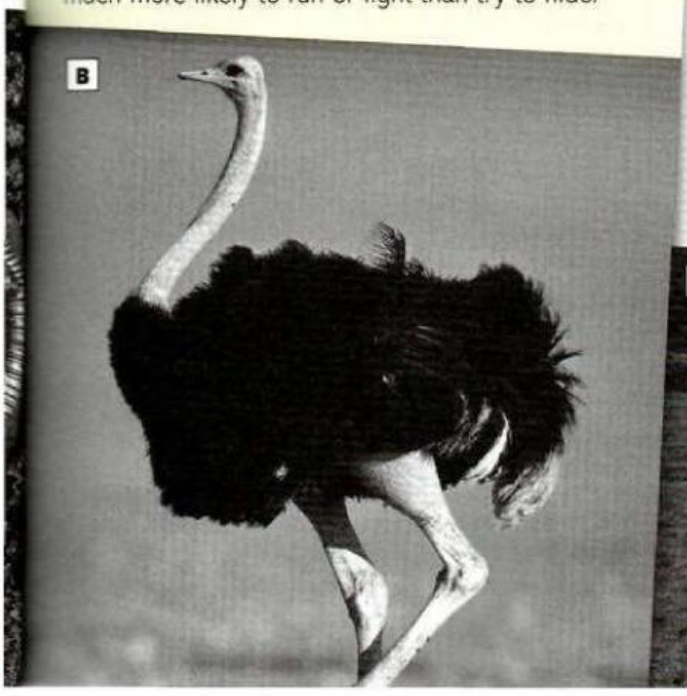
A Criticising my brother's driving is like a red rag to a bull. He'll lose his temper and you'll end up walking instead of getting a lift! The idiom 'like a red rag to a bull' is a useful way of describing something that is guaranteed to make another person angry, but where does it come from? Well, it's common knowledge that the colour of blood makes bulls angry – that's why a matador's cape is red, right? Wrong: bulls are actually colour-blind and it is the movement of the cape, and not its colour, that makes them charge at you, horns first. This is one of many common myths about the walking, flying, swimming and crawling creatures with whom we share our beautiful planet.

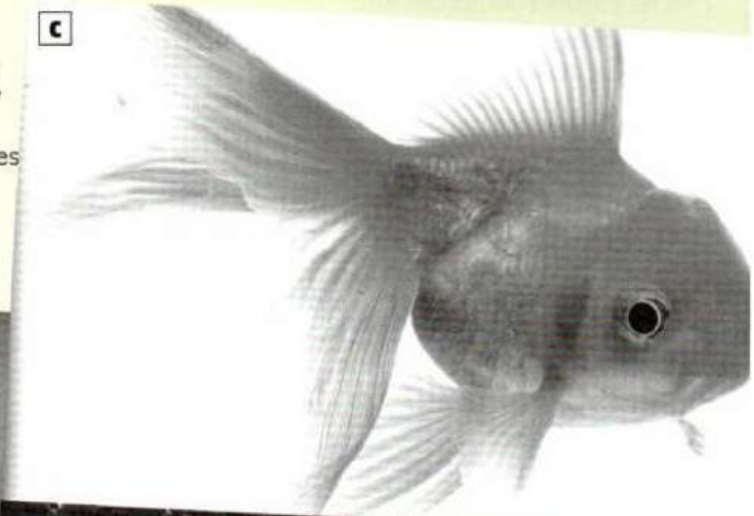
B The idiom 'as blind as a bat' is often used to describe someone who can't find something that's right in front of them. However, even a thorough search is unlikely to reveal a truly blind bat because in fact, all species in the bat family have eyes and are capable of sight. About seventy percent of them use echolocation to navigate, but that doesn't mean they can't see. The remaining thirty percent, mainly the larger species, don't even use echolocation and have excellent night vision. Another bat myth is that they love human hair. While they are known to occasionally dive towards people at high speed, scientific evidence shows that they are actually hunting insects and are not irresistibly attracted to your beautiful long hair!

C The idiom 'to bury your head in the sand' means to ignore a problem in the hope that it will go away. The saying is based on the behaviour of ostriches, known for using their beaks to dig holes in which to hide their head from enemies. The only problem is that this is not actually normal ostrich behaviour. The myth that the world's largest flightless birds do this is probably based on the writings of Pliny the Elder. He was a famous Roman naturalist who suggested around two thousand years ago that ostriches 'imagine, when they have thrust their head and neck into a bush, that the whole of their body is concealed.' Considering ostriches are the fastest creatures on two legs and have a kick powerful enough to kill a lion, they are much more likely to run or fight than try to hide.

D Moving from underground to underwater, there are several common myths about marine creatures. Firstly, the idea that fish, and especially goldfish, have a memory of just a few seconds is something people seem to remember, but ought to forget. Experiments suggest a fish's memory is much better than that, and can be counted in months rather than seconds. Next, sharks and the disturbing idea that these incredible predators can detect a single drop of blood in the water from miles around. True, though these often solitary hunters have poor eyesight, they do have a highly developed sense of smell, with some species able to detect a single drop of blood in about fifty litres of water. However, rather disappointingly (unless you're a fish or another of the shark's favourite prey), their noses are not as sensitive as is generally believed when it comes to blood.

E Finally, let's head back to dry land where the insects and invertebrates (creatures without backbones) creep and crawl. Firstly, despite the rumours, earthworms do not actually become two separate worms if you split them in half. Only a limited number of earthworm species can survive such serious injury – only the front half of the worm (where the mouth is located) is able to feed and so survive. Moving from zero to eight legs, you'll no doubt be relieved and thankful that it's not true that over a lifetime people swallow a large number of spiders during their sleep. While sleeping, we make all kinds of noises and movements that warn spiders of danger and prevent them from becoming unwanted midnight snacks. So, armed with that knowledge, I wish you a peaceful night's sleep, and if you are curious to learn more, there are plenty more myths connected to animals that you can read about online.







LIVEWORKSHEETS