



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## SQUIRRELS

Squirrels are exciting. In the summer, they run around right after the sun comes up. In the afternoon, the squirrels go back to their nests. They take naps. Two hours before the sun goes down, they get up and run around again. When it is dark outside at night, they stay inside their nests.

Squirrels are busiest of all in the wintertime. They run fast. They make turns in the air. Squirrels jump from tree branch to tree branch. They run all morning until lunch. After lunch, they go back to their nests to rest again. When the weather is bad, they do not leave their nests. However, they do not hibernate, or sleep all winter.

Squirrels have eyes on the top of their heads. These eyes help them to see objects without having to turn their heads. These eyes are difficult, too. They make it hard for the squirrel when it is eating. The squirrel's eyes are busy watching for *enemies* or danger. They do not pay attention to what they are eating because they are so busy watching for danger.

Male squirrels keep themselves very clean. The male squirrel cleans himself more times than the female squirrel. He keeps cleaning himself all day long.

Be careful when you play in the park. Squirrels are beautiful to watch, but they are not safe to touch. If you try and feed one from your hand, you could get bitten. Enjoy them from a distance.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. In which season is the squirrel most active?
  - a. summer
  - b. winter
  - c. fall
  - d. spring
2. Using the context clues in the passage, the word *enemies* most likely means . . .
  - a. friends.
  - b. boys.
  - c. threats.
  - d. girls
3. The author's purpose for this passage is . . .
  - a. to entertain.
  - b. to inform.
  - c. to tell you what a squirrel feels like.
  - d. to persuade.
4. According to this passage, what would be the danger of hand feeding a squirrel?
  - a. You could attract other squirrels.
  - b. You could contract a disease.
  - c. You will have to take him home.
  - d. You might get bitten.



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## SPARROWS

House sparrows are often seen in a neighborhood in the city. They like to live where there are a lot of people. They do not like to live in the country.

The female looks like she is wearing a brown cap on her head. Black streaks run down her brown back.

Male house sparrows look like they are wearing gray caps on their heads. They have a black bib under their chin, just like a baby. They have a rusty brown body. Black streaks run down the back of the male house sparrow.

Vacant lots which have dried plants or tree limbs are the perfect place for house sparrows. They love to build their nests in old trees or in empty corners. House sparrows nibble seeds that they find in the weeds or grass.

They may make nests with string or paper. These little birds pull and tear the paper. They weave it in with sticks. They love to stop and eat food out of bird feeders that hang on balconies. House sparrows will also take baths in birdbaths that people put out in front of their apartments or buildings.

Keep your eyes peeled if you live in the city. Chances are, you might see a house sparrow parading past!

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
  - a. to teach you how house sparrows eat
  - b. to teach you the life span of a house sparrow
  - c. to teach you to identify a sparrow in the city
  - d. to teach you how to keep house like a sparrow
2. Where do house sparrows **NOT** live?
 

a. in vacant lots	c. in nests made in dried plants
b. in the city	d. in the country
3. The author's purpose for this passage is . . .
 

a. to inform.	c. to entertain.
b. to persuade.	d. to make you sad.
4. In the text above, "keep your eyes peeled" means . . .
  - a. watch carefully.
  - b. make sure you wear make-up on your eyes.
  - c. use a potato peeler.
  - d. pay attention on rainy days.





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## HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbirds are amazing birds for many reasons. They fly like helicopters: backwards or floating in the air. They move from side to side. The hummingbirds zoom straight up into the sky or dive straight down. They spin their wings in circles. If their babies are in danger, they will even attack eagles. To build nests, they will pick fuzz off your sweater.

When they are awake, hummingbirds spend most of their day eating food. Hummingbirds are always on a quest for insects to eat. They need them for protein. Hummingbirds are always looking for objects from which to drink juice. They fly into brightly-colored objects that they think are food. Sometimes they even try to get juice from stop signs! They also drink nectar from flowers. Every day they visit up to 1,000 flowers to drink the juice!

Hummingbirds have special tongues. The fronts of their tongues are split in half. They have sharp edges. These edges help soak up juice from flowers. Their tongues lick flowers. As they hunt for insects, this tongue grabs the bugs and insects quickly.

Tongues, flying, and eating habits are just three of the things that make the hummingbird an unbelievable creature.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the passage, what is one reason why hummingbirds are amazing?
  - a. They make a great deal of noise.
  - b. They are very small and delicate.
  - c. They can fly like a helicopter.
  - d. They can drink water.
2. In the text, "a quest for insects" means . . .
 

a. questions about.	c. journey.
b. ability.	d. search.
3. The author's purpose for this passage is to . . .
  - a. entertain the reader with interesting hummingbird characteristics.
  - b. inform the reader about dangerous hummingbirds.
  - c. persuade the reader to purchase a hummingbird.
  - d. encourage the reader to keep insects in their garden.
4. Which group of words best describes a hummingbird?
 

a. never moves	c. extremely slow
b. constantly moving	d. enjoys meat and vegetables



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## CAT MYTHS

People believe things about cats that might not be true. These “myths” can confuse cat owners. If you like cats, learn the facts and fiction about them.

Some people think that cats need to drink milk. That is not true. If a cat eats a good diet, it does not need to drink milk. Does your cat drink milk? Most cats like milk, but it can make them sick. Cats should only have milk in small amounts.

Have you heard the one about garlic? People put garlic on cat food. They believe it will get rid of worms in the cat’s body. Does it work? Garlic makes food taste richer. Garlic does nothing to worms. It will give the cat bad breath! If your cat has worms, take it to an animal doctor. A veterinarian can give medicine to the cat. The medicine will take care of the worms.

Some people think that cats’ whiskers help them to balance. Whiskers serve as “feelers.” They do nothing at all for balance. “Feelers” help the cat know about its surroundings.

Have you heard these myths before? Do not believe them. Learn how to care for cats. Read books and talk to your veterinarian. Cats need good owners to care for them.

### STORY QUESTIONS

- According to the passage, what is the meaning of “if a cat eats a good diet”?
  - getting the treats it deserves
  - getting the right kind and amount of food to make them healthy
  - getting the right kind of love and attention
  - getting your neighbor to feed your cat while you are on vacation
- “Cat Myths” is mostly about. . .
  - creating a positive atmosphere for your cat.
  - stories that are true about cats.
  - stories that are not true about cats.
  - making sure you have dinner in time for your cat.
- A new title for this passage might be . . .
 

a. “The Truth About Cats.”	c. “Blame It on the Cat.”
b. “A Cat’s Life.”	d. “Safety for Cats.”
- When someone tells you new information about any topic, you should always . . .
  - read a book that gives you advice on friendship.
  - watch a TV show about chickens.
  - search the Internet for video games about cats.
  - check to see if the information is correct.





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## RATS

If you want to keep rats out of your house, there are a number of important things to remember.

First, pet food and pet dishes should be removed. When your pet is finished eating, take the dish away. Pet dishes that are outside attract rats. If you have to leave pet dishes outside, make sure they are properly sanitized.

Second, all trash should be put inside trashcans. Metal and heavy plastic cans are good places for trash. Make sure to close the lid. Trash should never be left in the yard. Remember to pick it up right away. Put it in the can and close the lid tightly. Trash blowing around the yard will bring unwanted furry creatures to visit.

Keep bird feeders on raised stands. Rats can eat birdseed that is close to the ground. Also, pile up any pieces of wood. Wood that is stacked will keep rats from building a nest. It should be stacked at least 18 inches above the ground. Put away pipes. These are places for rats to crawl in and out of and where they may build nests.

Last, keep windows closed tightly. Make sure windowpanes are unbroken. Rats love to crawl in cracked, broken windows. If they get in, it is hard to get them out. They will dig through everything and get into anything.

Your neighborhood can be rat free if you just follow these simple steps.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is this passage teaching us?
  - a. how to keep rats out of our yard and homes if we live in a neighborhood
  - b. how to keep rats out of our yard and homes if we live in a foreign country
  - c. how to keep rats out of our yard and homes if we live on the moon
  - d. how to keep rats out of our yard and homes if we live in Texas
2. Why is it important to take the pet dish inside when your pet is finished eating?
  - a. Pet food spoils and smells.
  - b. The dish could break outside.
  - c. It isn't important.
  - d. Rats will come to eat pet food.
3. In the text, "properly sanitized" means . . .
  - a. organized.
  - b. paid for.
  - c. cleaned.
  - d. dirty.
4. What information could be added to the text above?
  - a. Bird feeders may be placed on the ground.
  - b. Remove all cans or pet bowls that may catch the rain. Rats drink rainwater.
  - c. Leave yards full of rubbish and garbage piles.
  - d. Cracked or broken windows should not be replaced for two months.