



Name _____

Date _____

ANTS

Ants are incredible creatures. Each colony has its own smell. Each of the ants in the colony knows the smell. Enemies will not be able to enter their camp without being discovered. Several types of ants have a sting to protect their nest when intruders turn up.

The queen ant is the only one who can lay eggs for the colony. None of the other ants can lay eggs at all.

The worker ants cannot lay eggs. They take care of newborn baby ants. They also search for food. These worker ants protect their nest from enemies. They also keep the nest spick and span. They take out the "trash" from the nest and place it in one area.

Slave-maker ants rob the nest of other ants. They steal the pupae, the cases that hold the ant eggs. Then they bring the pupae back to their camp. When the stolen cases hatch, these stolen ants become slaves.

Finally, all ants have antennas and jaws. They need antennas for smelling and touching. They have strong, long jaws. They open and shut sideways like pairs of scissors. Adult ants cannot chew and swallow food, so they squeeze the food until the juice comes out. They swallow the juice and throw away the leftover dried parts of the food.

Ant colonies must have worker ants and slave-maker ants. They must also have a queen ant to lay eggs. They must have a way to catch other ants that try to get into their nest. Without a queen to lay eggs, or antennas to hear and touch, and jaws to tear food, there would be no ant colonies left in the world.

STORY QUESTIONS

- According to the text, what are *pupae*?
 - the cases that hold the ant eggs
 - baby ants
 - adult ants
 - worker ants
- Using the context above, another word for *intruders* would be . . .
 - unwanted friends.
 - unwanted vacationers.
 - unwanted enemies.
 - unwanted slaves.
- This passage is about . . .
 - ants going to war.
 - unusual qualities of the ant.
 - ants and their hobbies.
 - how ants take out the trash.
- Which words could be used instead of "spick and span" in the text above?
 - sluggish and lazy
 - dirty and piggish
 - disgusting and awful
 - clean and neat



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CROWS

Crows can be a problem for farmers. They eat crops and bother farm workers. But they also do things that help farmers. Crows eat weeds, grasshoppers, wireworms, and cutworms. When crows eat these bugs and weeds, they help the farmer!

Crows are easy to spot. Most crows are black. Some are black with white, brown, or gray. Crows have black beaks and black legs. They are usually between 8 and 12 inches (20 to 30 cm) long. Their wings are between 16 and 24 inches (40 to 60 cm) wide.

Crows can be friendly with other crows. Adults enjoy being together. In the fall, crows fly south to warm weather. This is called migrating. When they migrate, they fly with many other crows.

Crows build nests in trees, bushes, or on the tops of buildings. They make their nests by weaving twigs together like a mat. Crows use roots, grasses, and bark from the trees to put inside of the nest. This makes the nest soft for the baby crows.

The female crow lays between four and seven eggs. They are blue-green in color. The male crow sits on the eggs. He helps to keep them warm until they hatch. When crows have babies, they like to be alone. After the babies are older, the crows will mix with other crows again.

How can you keep crows away from places? Some people make scarecrows to frighten them away. The scarecrows are made to look like people. They blow in the wind to look like people are moving. Scarecrows left to stand in one place will not work. The crows think of them as a place to land or sit. Crows are quick-witted. They can tell when a trap has been set.

Some people dislike crows. Others like the black, shiny birds.

STORY QUESTIONS

- In the passage, *migrate* means . . .
 - flying to Florida.
 - flying to Alaska.
 - flying south for warm weather.
 - flying north for warm weather.
- The words "quick-witted" could be changed to . . .
 - speedy flyers.
 - slow thinkers.
 - fast thinkers.
 - quick artists.
- The author's purpose for writing this passage is . . .
 - to persuade the reader to look at crows in a new way.
 - to inform the reader about building a nest.
 - to entertain the reader with jokes about crows.
 - to warn the reader about dangerous birds.
- According to this passage, how do crows help farmers?
 - They are intelligent and quick-witted.
 - They know that scarecrows cannot harm them.
 - They build large, bulky nests.
 - They eat weeds and bugs.



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HORSES

Did you know horses are in the same family as donkeys, zebras, and mules? It is true. Horses are in the equus family. Their name comes from a Greek word. It means quick.

There are over 350 kinds of horses. They are divided into four main groups: the "light" horses, the "heavy" horses, ponies, and wild or semi-wild horses.

"Light" horses have small bones. They weigh less than 1,300 pounds (590 kg). They have thin legs.

"Heavy" horses are strong and have big bones. They also have sturdy legs. "Heavy horses" can weigh up to 2,000 pounds (907 kg).

Ponies are no taller than 58 inches (147 cm). If you measure in horse language, one would measure in hands. Ponies, then, are no more than 14 ½ hands tall.

Wild or semi-wild horses have not been tamed. These horses do not live with people. They live in the open fields and run free.

A person can tell the age of a horse by checking its teeth. Its age can only be checked by its teeth before it is ten years old.

All horses have small stomachs. They must eat small amounts of food throughout the day. All horses love to eat short, juicy grass. Horses that live outside will nibble grass all day. If they live in a stable, they will munch on hay as often as it is given to them. If they are workhorses, they will eat better if the person feeding them gives them maize (corn), oats, or barley. It can be added to their regular food. They also enjoy treats.

All horses love to run, canter, gallop, walk, or trot.

STORY QUESTIONS

- How many main groups of horses are there?
 - 5
 - 340
 - 4
 - 350
- Which animals are related to the horse?
 - mules, donkeys, and zebras
 - donkeys, zebras, and chickens
 - mules, zebras, and cows
 - zebras, alligators, cows
- What do all of the horses have in common?
 - They all eat hay from the stables.
 - They have small stomachs and eat throughout the day.
 - They all weigh more than 1,300 pounds.
 - They all have teeth that are 10 years old.
- Which of these is **NOT** a fact about horses from the passage?
 - "Heavy" horses weigh more than "light" horses.
 - Horses belong to the equus family.
 - They all live to be 25 years or older.
 - Horses love short, juicy grass.



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INTERESTING BIRD

Do you like to walk through the park early in the morning? If you do, you might see an interesting bird. It has black and white marks on its face. It has a black and white tail.

This bird might pretend to make the sound of a hawk. It might steal wasp eggs from a wasp nest. It might bury an acorn in the ground. It might nibble on acorns or nuts. It might gobble seeds found on the ground.

You could see it chasing grasshoppers, caterpillars, lizards, frogs, or other small animals. If you are lucky, you might see this bird catching an insect as it flies in the air. Zip! Zap! Goodbye, bug!

During your walk, this bird might be sitting on the trees or shrubs. This bird could be running to and fro on the ground.

Its blue-green spotted eggs will be hidden in its nest. If you see the nest, you will see twigs, little pieces of bark, leaves, and trash. The nest will probably be hidden in a corner of a building. It might be in an old, broken crate. Or finally, it might be hidden as high as thirty feet up in a tree.

What is the mystery bird? Take a walk in the park. You might see the blue jay!

STORY QUESTIONS

1. From this passage, we can conclude that the blue jay is . . .
 - a. a very busy bird.
 - b. a lazy bird.
 - c. an angry bird.
 - d. a bird with a schedule.
2. In this passage, the author describes . . .
 - a. the states where blue jays live.
 - b. how the baby birds learn to fly.
 - c. blue jays taking a bath.
 - d. the blue jay's nest.
3. The author's purpose for this passage is . . .
 - a. to entertain the reader with the tricks blue jays play on people.
 - b. to inform the reader so they can identify the blue jay.
 - c. to persuade the reader to go to the park in search of crows.
 - d. to help the reader build a birdhouse.
4. If you wished to locate more information on the blue jay, which resource would be useful?
 - a. a TV show on birds of the Amazon rainforest
 - b. a pamphlet on urban (city) birds
 - c. a book about whales
 - d. a radio show on animals of the sea



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DUCKS

When I think about ducks, I picture my mother's pets. She saved Lucy and Fran from a swampy area when I was 16 years old. The little ducks were weak and sick. My mother helped them to get healthy.

Lucy and Fran lived in a large cardboard box in the garage. They became family pets. They were members of our family. Lucy followed me around. She quacked and quacked. She liked attention.

My brother Tim read everything he could find about ducks. He learned to care for our pets. He made sure that the box in the garage was fit for our pets. It had a heat lamp and a feeder. He gave them water, shavings, and fresh straw each day. What a hit! Lucy and Fran loved their house. They quacked to say, "Thank you!"

One rainy morning, Lucy waddled near me to the mailbox. She walked so close we bumped into each other. I tumbled into a gigantic mud puddle. All the letters from the mailbox got wet and soggy. They dripped with muddy, brown water.

To make things worse, Tim watched from the window. When I got back into the house, he was on the kitchen floor holding the sides of his stomach. He roared with laughter.

I stomped my feet and threw up my arms. My mom calmly listened to me shout and carry on. "It's okay, honey. If you prefer to splash in puddles, you can trade beds with the ducks!" she comforted.

With that in mind, I went to the garage and made my peace with the ducks. My own bed looked a lot better than their shavings and heat lamp.

STORY QUESTIONS

- What is the name of the author's little brother?
a. Tim b. Honey c. Mom d. Sam
- The story "Ducks" is mostly about a . . .
a. boy's journey to save two ducks. c. mother's love for animals.
b. person's adventure with two ducks. d. family's adventure with ducks on vacation.
- The author's purpose for this passage is . . .
a. to inform the reader about mistakes people make while caring for ducks.
b. to inform the reader about the proper care and feeding of ducks.
c. to persuade the reader to buy a pet duck.
d. to entertain the reader with a story from the past.
- To properly care for ducks, you should get . . .
a. a feeder, a large cardboard box, newspaper clippings, and a heat lamp.
b. fresh water, a large cardboard box, and a heat lamp.
c. a box of band aids, fresh water, a large cardboard box, shavings, and a heat lamp.
d. a stuffed animal, fresh water, a miniature cardboard box, shavings, and a heat lamp.