



Name _____

Date _____

RACCOONS

Raccoons are cute and clever. People love their little masked faces and their comical antics. Raccoons can solve problems, and they can make messes. A raccoon can open the lid on a trashcan. Some have even opened entire garage doors!

Raccoons live in forests. They climb trees and live in nests in tree trunks. They can fish and hunt for food. Raccoons also live in cities and near homes. They live in parks and backyards. They travel through waterways and eat trash.

People should carefully wrap trash that contains food. Raccoons feast on scraps of bread, vegetables, meats, and sweets. Put these “treats” in tied plastic bags and put the bags in a strong trashcan. Make sure the lid is tight, or a raccoon might snack at your house this evening!

Raccoons are messy. They scatter food scraps, paper, cans, and other trash in yards and other areas. Would you like to clean up after a raccoon?

Raccoons played a part in history. Pictures of pioneer men wearing raccoon skin hats are often found in history books. Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett wore them. The caps kept heads warm and protected them from being scratched by branches.

Raccoons look sweet, but beware. People think they are cuddly, but raccoons are wild animals. Raccoons are dangerous. They have sharp teeth and claws. They can carry diseases. Never approach a wild raccoon. They are cute, but they are not pets.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. Where do raccoons live?
 - a. only in forests
 - b. only near people
 - c. neither in forests nor near people
 - d. in forests and near people

2. What are some of the negative things raccoons do?
 - a. They damage property and shred paper.
 - b. They can open your lids and doors.
 - c. They tear trash out of cans.
 - d. All of the above.

3. If you gave the passage a new title, it could be . . .
 - a. “Battle Over Raccoons.”
 - b. “Keeping Your Own Raccoon.”
 - c. “How to Care for a Raccoon of Your Own.”
 - d. “Raccoons Are Clever but Dangerous.”

4. Raccoon hats were worn by . . .
 - a. pilgrims.
 - b. cowboys.
 - c. pioneers.
 - d. pirates.



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MILKING COWS

Cows first came to America in 1611. Each farming family usually kept its own cow. A family member would milk the cow each day. It gave them milk to drink. They had to milk the cows by hand. The milk then was boiled in a big pot over the fire. It then had to cool, and after that someone skimmed the cream off the top of the pan.

Dairy farmers raise and milk cows for us. For hundreds of years, farmers spent many hours milking. Farmers, or their family members, sat on stools to squeeze milk from the cows' udders. This chore was time consuming and tiring.

Today's farmers use machines to help with milking. They can milk many cows at one time. The machines often do a better job milking than a person could.

These modern machines have long, clear hoses. The hoses carry milk to big metal tanks. The tanks hold and clean the milk. These machines help farmers milk enough cows for us all to have milk in our homes.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the passage, what has improved over time?
 - a. Farmers can milk cows much faster.
 - b. Farmers can run faster.
 - c. Farmers can plow fields faster.
 - d. Farmers can drive tractors faster.

2. The main idea of the last paragraph is . . .
 - a. all cows chew their cud.
 - b. cows have four digestive compartments.
 - c. cows make wonderful household pets.
 - d. modern equipment helps farmers.

3. The first cow arrived in America in . . .

a. 1610.	b. 1612.	c. 1611.	d. 1832.
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4. What is the main idea of the passage?
 - a. learning to care for a cow
 - b. how technology has changed milking cows
 - c. how to search for information about cows
 - d. how to plan an interview with a farmer



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PIGS

Pigs are misunderstood. Some people think of them as lazy and stupid. Did you know that pigs are very smart? Pigs are smarter than most pets and wild animals. Experts claim that pigs are easier to train than dogs and cats. Would you want a pig for a pet?

Keeping a pet pig is fun, but it is work. Pigs like to go for walks like a dog. Would you like to walk a pig down your street? They can be trained to do tricks, and they like to be petted. They usually get along with other pets.

Pet pigs must be kept on a diet. They like to eat like hogs! An adult pet pot-bellied pig should not weigh more than 150 pounds. But many weigh up to 300 pounds due to overfeeding.

Do you sweat like a pig? Real pigs don't sweat. They cool their bodies by rolling in mud. Yet, pigs are some of the cleanest animals on the earth. Pigs can learn to use a litter box like a cat. They can be house-trained. Many live in houses and apartments. But they can get in the way.

Pigs have a keen sense of smell. They help find truffles in the forests. These mushroom-like plants sell for high prices. So the pigs are valued for their work.

In addition to ham, bacon, and pork, pigs provide us with many useful products. Pig hair is used to make hairbrushes and furniture. Drugs and medical procedures use pig parts to help sick people.

Pigs are found in every part of the world. They serve many useful purposes. Some pigs even dig holes for plant seeds to fall into and grow. Pigs may have been the world's first farmers!

STORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the text, pigs make good pets because . . .
 - a. they like to watch television.
 - b. you can ride a pig.
 - c. they are smart and clean companions.
 - d. they chase cats.
2. Pigs are found . . .
 - a. throughout the entire world.
 - b. throughout Europe.
 - c. on tropical islands.
 - d. in America and Australia.
3. Pet pot-bellied pigs should not weigh more than . . .
 - a. 300 pounds.
 - b. 150 pounds.
 - c. 50 pounds.
 - d. 500 pounds.
4. The author's purpose for writing this passage is . . .
 - a. to entertain the reader with pig tales.
 - b. to persuade the reader to buy pig products.
 - c. to persuade the reader to get a pet pig.
 - d. to inform the reader about the many qualities of pigs.



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HERDING DOGS

Did you know that herding dogs come in many shapes and sizes? Some are tall. Some are short. Some are lean, and some are stocky. The shortest herding dogs are Welsh corgis. These little dogs were bred to herd cattle. Their short legs move quickly when they run around the herd, and their short, little bodies can avoid a kick from an angry cow.

Most herding dogs are medium-sized. The border collie is famous for its intelligence. These dogs are active and always moving. They look for cues from the shepherd, and they work as a team. Border collies could almost work alone. They know what to do if a sheep strays.

Large dogs, like German shepherds and Belgian sheepdogs, work many jobs. They can herd, but more often they work with police, guide the blind, or provide protection to families.

Herding dogs are also trained for search and rescue work. Any time there is a disaster, you will see teams of dogs working to find missing people. Herding dogs are some of the best workers, because they are strong and determined.

Today, most dogs don't work in the jobs they were bred to do. People love them as pets. However, if given a chance, a herding dog might try to round up, or herd, the entire family. The desire to round up the group is in its blood.

STORY QUESTIONS

- Which breed is the shortest herding dog?
 - Shetland sheepdog
 - Welsh corgi
 - puli
 - collie
- The border collie is a good pet for someone who . . .
 - likes to lounge on the couch all evening.
 - doesn't have a backyard.
 - is active and enjoys taking the dog on long walks.
 - worries about dog hair on the sofa.
- How has the job of the herding dog changed over the years?
 - All are trained as search and rescue dogs.
 - Some owners take their dogs to the beach.
 - Some have become pets and are no longer trained to perform traditional jobs.
 - They make great babysitters.
- Which job would **NOT** be good for a herding dog?
 - retrieving ducks from a pond
 - working with a police officer
 - locating a lost hiker in the mountains
 - rounding up a herd of cattle



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SHEEP

If you are wearing a warm, wooly sweater, thank a sheep. Wool from sheep's coats have been knit, woven, and sewn into products for many centuries. Wool is soft and warm. It resists fire and can be easily stored.

People make sweaters, clothing, blankets, rugs, carpets, and even mattresses for beds from wool. The natural fibers are washed, dyed, and combed to make yarn.

Sheep need very little care. They can climb rocks without falling. They can go for long periods without water. They eat wood and shrubs, which can be found anywhere.

Sheep are raised in one of two ways. Some sheep live in fenced pastures. Farmers provide food and water every day. Other sheep are more independent. They live on land that is owned by the farmer. They roam the grounds and find food for themselves.

Some sheep are still wild. The largest of the wild sheep live in Siberia. They are four feet (1.2 meters) tall at the shoulder. Wild sheep have enemies. Wolves and coyotes hunt sheep. Diseases and insects can make sheep sick.

Today, more than 800 breeds and varieties of sheep exist. There are five main groups of sheep. They are grouped by their fleece (wool) types. They are fine wool, long wool, crossbred wool, medium wool, and coarse wool.

People value sheep for their wool, and for meat and fat. Meat from sheep is called mutton. It is used in stews and other dishes. Fat from sheep can be made into candles and soap.



STORY QUESTIONS

1. Why are sheep important to people?
 - a. They are cute pets.
 - b. Sheep can cut your grass.
 - c. Sheep provide wool, meat, and fats.
 - d. Counting sheep helps people sleep.
2. What is sheep meat called?
 - a. mutton
 - b. steak
 - c. pork
 - d. beef
3. What product made of sheep fat can be burned in your home?
 - a. soap
 - b. a candle
 - c. carpet
 - d. paper
4. The main idea of this passage is . . .
 - a. to entertain the reader with funny sheep jokes.
 - b. to inform the reader about the many things sheep contribute to our lives.
 - c. to persuade the reader to sheep sit.
 - d. to inform the reader about things to look for when buying sheep.