Name_____

Chinchillas

Chinchillas are small mammals that are native to the Andes Mountains. They have heavy fur coats that keep them warm in their native areas. In fact, they are best known for their soft, thick fur. Their fur-covered bodies measure anywhere from eleven to eighteen inches in length. Over the years, their fur has been made popular with people who make fur coats.

Because people hunted the chinchillas for their fur, by the 1940s, these small rodents were almost extinct. To save the animals, people began captive-breeding programs to supply the manufacturers with the needed animal hides. Also, laws were passed in some countries to protect the chinchillas that still lived in the wild. Even with these measures, chinchillas are extremely rare and hard to find in their natural habitats.

Today, some people keep these small rodents as pets. Despite the fact that they are classified as rodents, chinchillas are actually relatively clean and gentle. Choosing a chinchilla as a pet requires a lot of responsibility. Chinchillas must eat a special diet that consists of grains and vegetables. Pet owners can buy specially made pellets that contain the nutrients needed by the animal. If treated well, domesticated chinchillas can live close to twenty years.

Text Questions

1. Why were chinchillas nearly hunted to extinction?
   a. People wanted them as pets.
   b. People wanted their fur.
   c. People wanted them to eat.
   d. People wanted to get rid of the rodents.
2. Which part of the text helps you to explain your answer for question one?
   a. the title
   b. first paragraph
   c. second paragraph
   d. third paragraph
3. Which statement is <u>not</u> a fact about chinchillas?
   a. Chinchillas were hunted nearly to extinction by the 1940s.
   b. Chinchillas are native to the Andes Mountains.
   c. Chinchillas can be purchased as pets.
   d. Chinchillas help control the population of certain snakes found in the Andes Mountains.
4. Using the information from the text, what can you infer about hunting chinchillas today?
   a. They are protected in the wild.
   b. They are not protected in the wild.
   c. There are no chinchillas in the wild left to hunt.
   d. There are special weekends set up during the year when chinchillas may be hunted.
5. What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
   a. to inform
   b. to entertain
   c. to persuade
   d. to advertise

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