Unit 5 Animal world

Reading 1

Sentence completion

1 Quickly read the passage on the right and answer these questions.

1 Where do honey badgers live?

.....

2 What do they look like?

.....

3 Why is 'honey badger' not a good name for this animal?

.....

2 Read Questions 1–8 below.

1 Underline the key words.
2 Decide what type of information you need for each gap.

Questions 1–8

1 Although they are not big animals, honey badgers are fearless, ... and tough.
2 Honey badgers will attack ..... if they need to protect themselves.
3 The pattern and colours on the honey badger's back make it ..... .
4 The food they eat is meat-based and ..... .
5 ..... form the biggest part of a honey badger's diet.
6 Honey badgers find the creatures they eat by their ..... .
7 ..... are often used to catch honey badgers which attack beehives.
8 For one particular type of food, the honey badger has a ..... with another creature.

The honey badger

It looks harmless and vulnerable. But the honey badger is afraid of nothing... and will attack and eat almost anything

The honey badger (*Melivora capensis*), is an African and south-Asian mammal that has a reputation for being one of the world's most fearless animals, despite its small size. And in spite of its gentle-sounding name, it is also one of its most aggressive. Honey badgers have been known to attack lions, buffalo, and snakes three times their size. Even humans are not safe from a honey badger if it thinks the human will attack or harm it. They are also extremely tough creatures, and can recover quickly from injuries that would kill most other animals.

At first glance, honey badgers look like the common European badger. They are usually between 75cm and 1 metre long, although males are about twice the size of females. They are instantly recognisable by grey and white stripes that extend from the top of the head to the tail. Closer inspection, which is probably not a wise thing to do, reveals pointed teeth, and sharp front claws which can be four centimetres in length.

Honey badgers are meat-eating animals with an extremely varied diet. They mainly eat a range of small creatures like beetles, lizards and birds, but will also catch larger reptiles like snakes and small crocodiles. Some mammals, such as foxes, antelope and wild cats also form part of their diet.

The badgers locate their prey mainly using their excellent sense of smell, and catch most of their prey through digging. During a 24-hour period, they may dig as many as fifty holes, and travel more than 40 kilometres. They are also good climbers, and can easily climb very tall trees to steal eggs from birds' nests, or catch other tree-dwelling creatures.

As their name suggests, honey badgers have always been associated with honey, although they do not actually eat it. It is the highly nutritious bee eggs (called 'brood') that they prefer, and they will do anything to find it. They usually cause a lot of damage to the hive in the process, and for this reason, humans are one of their main predators. Bee-keepers will often set special traps for honey badgers, to protect their hives.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the honey badger is its working relationship with a bird called the greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*). This bird deliberately guides the badger to beehives, then waits while the badger breaks into the hive and extracts the brood. The two creatures, bird and mammal, then share the brood between them.

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❸ **Now complete Questions 1–8. Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.**

Reading 2

Pick from a list

❹ **You are going to read more about the honey badger. Before you do this, look at the exam question in the box and answer the questions 1-4.**

1 Why did the wildlife experts visit the Kalahari desert? Choose two reasons.

A To find where honey badgers live.
B To observe how honey badgers behave.
C To try to change the way honey badgers behave.
D To temporarily catch some honey badgers.
E To find out why honey badgers have such a bad reputation.

1 Underline the key words in the question.
2 Find the paragraph in the passage where the question is dealt with.
3 Now look at these five options for the question above. Look for the answers in the text. Delete three answers which are NOT possible.
4 Which two options are you left with?
..... and .....

On the trail of the honey badger

Researchers learn more about this fearless African predator

On a recent field trip to the Kalahari Desert, a team of researchers learnt a lot more about honey badgers. They were rewarded with a detailed insight into how these fascinating creatures live and hunt.

The team employed a local wildlife expert, Kitso Khama, to help them locate and follow the badgers across the desert. Their main aim was to study the badgers' movements and behaviour as discreetly as possible, without frightening them away or causing them to change their natural behaviour. They also planned to trap a few and study them close up before releasing them. In view of the animal's reputation, this was something that even Khama was reluctant to do.

'The problem with honey badgers is they are naturally curious animals, especially when they see something new,' he says. 'That, combined with their unpredictable nature, can be a dangerous mixture. If they sense you have food, for example, they won't be shy about coming right up to you for something to eat. They're actually quite sociable creatures around humans, but as soon as they feel they might be in danger, they can become extremely vicious. Fortunately this is rare, but it does happen.'

The research confirmed many things that were already known. As expected, honey badgers ate any creatures they could catch and kill. Even poisonous snakes, feared and avoided by most other animals, were not safe from them. The researchers were surprised, however, by the animal's fondness for local melons, probably because of their high water content. Previously researchers thought that the animal got all of its liquid requirements from its prey. The team also learnt that, contrary to previous research findings, the badgers occasionally formed loose family groups. They were also able to confirm certain results from previous research, including the fact that female badgers never socialised with each other.

Following some of the male badgers was a challenge, since they can cover large distances in a short space of time. Some hunting territories cover more than 500 square kilometres. Although they seem happy to share these territories with other males, there are occasional fights over an important food source, and male badgers can be as aggressive towards each other as they are towards other species.

As the badgers became accustomed to the presence of people, it gave the team the chance to get up close to them without being the subject of the animals' curiosity – or their sudden aggression. The badgers' eating patterns, which had been disrupted, returned to normal. It also allowed the team to observe more closely some of the other creatures that form working associations with the honey badger, as these seemed to adopt the badgers' relaxed attitude when near humans.

❺ **Read the rest of the passage and choose TWO letters, A–E, for Questions 2–5.**

Questions 2–5

2 What two things does Kitso Khama say about honey badgers?

A They show interest in things they are not familiar with.
B It's hard to tell how they will behave.
C They are always looking for food.

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D They do not enjoy human company.
E It is common for them to attack people.

3 What two things did the team find out about honey badgers?
A There are some creatures they will not eat.
B They were afraid of poisonous creatures.
C They may get some of the water they need from fruit.
D They do not always live alone.
E Female badgers do not mix with male badgers.

4 According to the passage, which of these two features are typical of male badgers?
A They don't run very quickly.
B They hunt over a very large area.
C They defend their territory from other badgers.
D They sometimes fight each other.
E They are more aggressive than females.

5 What two things happened when the honey badgers got used to humans being around them?
A The badgers lost interest in people.
B The badgers became less aggressive towards other creatures.
C The badgers started eating more.
D Other animals started working with the badgers.
E Other animals near them became more relaxed.

Vocabulary

What type of word is it? 2

❶ **Look at the endings of the words in bold in each of these sentences. Decide if they are nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs.**

1 I'm sorry, but I **accidentally** broke your favourite cup. ....adverb....
2 Rats can be very **aggressive** creatures when they feel threatened. .....
3 Can I have your **attention**, everyone, please? .....
4 We decided to **celebrate** his birthday with a big party. .....
5 It's hard to work with that **continuous** noise in the background. .....
6 There's an excellent **cultural** centre in our city. .....
7 He's a keen **environmentalist**, and spends a lot of time working with animals. .....
8 A good **teacher** should listen as well as talk. .....

❷ **Complete the table with *nouns*, *verbs*, *adjectives* or *adverbs*, using Exercise 1 as a guide.**

Words which end in	1 -ate	are often	verbs
	2 -ist		.....
	3 -ion		.....
	4 -er		.....
	5 -ive		.....
	6 -ly		.....
	7 -ous		.....
	8 -al		.....

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3 Complete these sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

1 I've never been very ambitious (ambition) and would be quite happy working in an office.
2 There are two main ..... (politics) parties in my country.
3 I would love to be a wildlife ..... (photograph).
4 You should ask your ..... (pharmacy) if he can give you something for your cough.
5 When you give a talk, it's a good idea to ..... (illustration) it with pictures.
6 After six hours on the road, we ..... (final) arrived at the nature reserve.
7 She's very ..... (talk) but never seems to listen.
8 He led an ..... (adventure) life and wrote a lot of books.
9 After a brief ..... (introduce), she began her talk.
10 I always feel really ..... (nerves) before an exam.

Key vocabulary

4 Replace the words and phrases in *italics* with words and phrases from the box which have a similar meaning.

archives	brilliant	colony	came upon	
estimate	get rid of	hostile		
harmless	indicates	risky	shift	~~spotted~~

1 On the journey we *saw* several leopards and a couple of lions. spotted
2 We need to *move* these boxes into another room. .....
3 Working with poisonous snakes can be quite *dangerous*. .....
4 Recent evidence *shows* that elephant numbers on the reserve are rising. .....
5 Many people are afraid of spiders, even though most of them are *not dangerous*. .....
6 We *guess* that the land will take at least five years to recover from the fire. .....
7 The research team *found* a species of bird that everyone thought was extinct. .....
8 Annual rainfall figures going back to 1887 can be found in the national *records*. .....
9 The frog we found was yellow, with *very bright* pink markings. .....
10 We need to *throw away* all of this rubbish as soon as possible. .....
11 The lizard is able to survive in very *unpleasant and dangerous* environments. .....
12 If you disturb a *group* of red ants, they are likely to attack you. .....

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