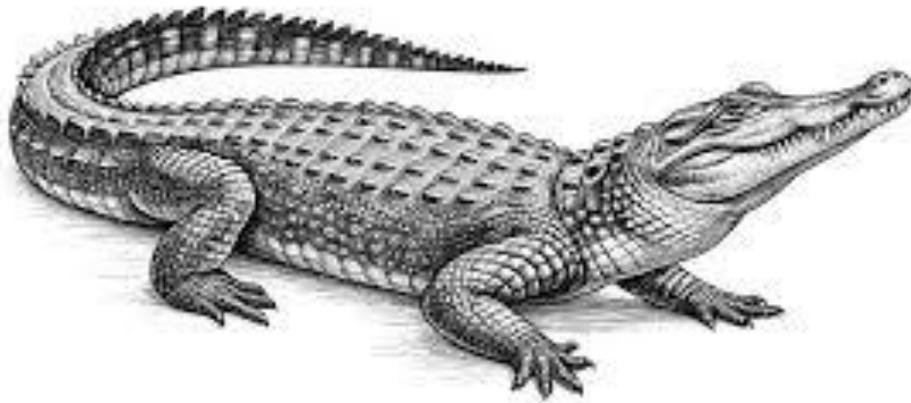


# Reading Comprehension Activities

## Year 6



**All questions must be answered in students' work books.**

**Students - Do not write on or mark the pages of this document.**

# An Extraordinary Bike

Read this paragraph about an unusual bicycle. As you read, think about the main idea of the paragraph. Then answer the questions.

## An Extraordinary Bike

Bicycles have been around for more than 200 years. The first bikes weren't much fun to ride. Riders had to use their feet to push themselves along the ground. Then, in the 1870s, a bike called the *ordinary* appeared. The ordinary was different from the early bikes. It had pedals, handlebars and brakes. It also had a huge front wheel and a tiny back wheel. Each full turn of the big wheel made the bike go farther. The seat was almost on top of the front wheel. So, getting on and off the ordinary was difficult. The rider also needed a lot of skill just to stay upright. Still, people enjoyed riding the ordinary. The ordinary was the first popular bike.



1. What is the main idea of the paragraph?
  - Ⓐ The ordinary had a huge front wheel.
  - Ⓑ Getting on and off the ordinary was difficult.
  - Ⓒ The ordinary was the first popular bike.
  - Ⓓ Riders used their feet to push the first bikes along.
2. Where or how did you find the main idea?
  - Ⓐ in the first sentence of the paragraph
  - Ⓑ in the last sentence of the paragraph
  - Ⓒ in the middle of the paragraph
  - Ⓓ by thinking about the most important idea in the paragraph

# The milk maid

Read this fable from Aesop. Then answer the questions.



A farmer's daughter had been out to milk the cows. She was returning to the dairy, carrying her bucket of milk upon her head. As the milkmaid walked along, she began daydreaming.

'The milk in this bucket will provide me with cream. I will make the cream into butter and take it to market to sell. With the money I make, I will buy a number of eggs. The eggs will hatch and produce a number of chickens. I shall sell some of my fowls and with the money they will bring in, I will buy myself a new gown. I shall wear the gown when I go to the fair. All the young fellows will try to win my affection. But I shall toss my head and have nothing to say to them.'

Forgetting all about the bucket, the milkmaid acted out her last words and tossed her head. Down went the bucket. All the milk was spilled and all of her dreams vanished in the air.



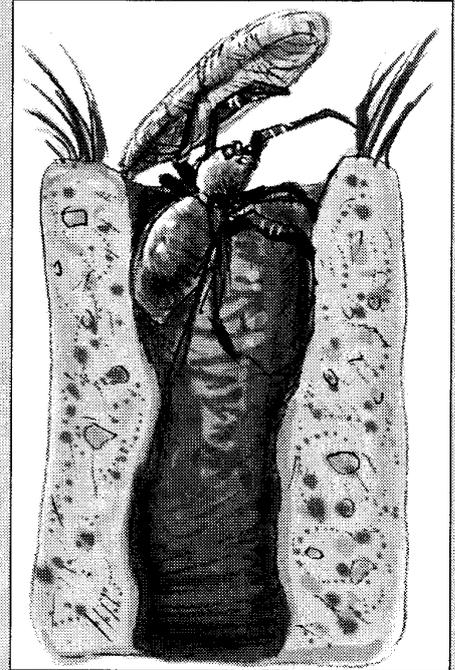
1. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?
  - Ⓐ The cream from milk can be made into butter.
  - Ⓑ The milkmaid would rather raise chickens than milk cows.
  - Ⓒ The milkmaid dreams of all the things her milk will bring to her.
  - Ⓓ The milkmaid likes fancy clothes.
2. The last paragraph is mostly about
  - Ⓐ how the milkmaid's forgetfulness made her plans disappear.
  - Ⓑ how the milkmaid acted selfishly.
  - Ⓒ how mistakes happen to everyone.
  - Ⓓ how the milkmaid worried that her father would be upset.
3. What is the fable mostly about?
  - Ⓐ milk that vanishes into the air
  - Ⓑ a girl who makes plans about things that haven't happened yet
  - Ⓒ a daughter who behaves badly
  - Ⓓ a milkmaid who wastes food
4. What is the best title for the fable?
  - Ⓐ 'Spilled Milk'
  - Ⓑ 'The Farmer's Proud Daughter'
  - Ⓒ 'Don't Count Your Chickens Before They've Hatched'
  - Ⓓ 'Going to the Market'

# A spider named Legs

Read this story about a spider named Legs. Then answer questions about the story. Choose the best answer

Legs was a trap-door spider. He lived in a hole in the ground. The opening to his tunnel was a door made of dirt and silk. This trapdoor fit tightly over the opening, like a cork in a bottle. Every night, Legs lifted up the door and waited for his dinner. When an insect came near, Legs ran out and grabbed it.

Legs was mostly content, but one thing made him unhappy. He was tired of people always praising the work of web-building spiders. Legs wished more people knew that some spiders didn't build webs. Some spiders, like him, were brave hunters. After all, Legs didn't wait for food to enter his trap. He used his sharp eyes and fast legs to go after his meals. Legs hoped that someday his wish would come true, and he would get the attention he deserved.



## Finding Main Idea

1. The story is mostly about
  - Ⓐ a spider who feels left out.
  - Ⓑ a proud web builder.
  - Ⓒ a spider who is never happy.
  - Ⓓ a brave hunter.

## Finding Main Idea

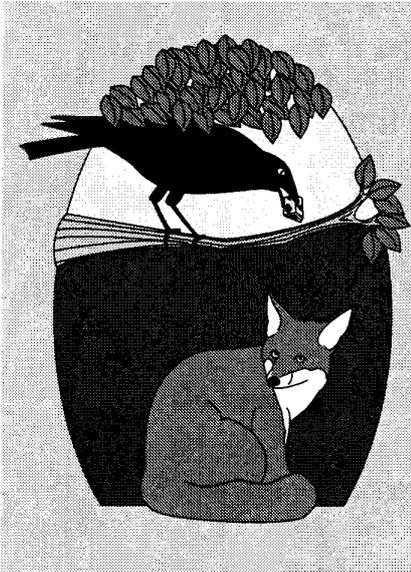
2. What is the best title for the story?
  - Ⓐ 'Entering a Trap'
  - Ⓑ 'One Wish'
  - Ⓒ 'Through a Trapdoor'
  - Ⓓ 'The Content Spider'

# The fox and the crow

Many reading passages tell details and events in the order in which they happened. Look for sequence in these kinds of reading passages:

- ★ directions
- ★ newspaper stories
- ★ journal entries
- ★ stories, fables and folktales
- ★ history articles
- ★ autobiographies and biographies

Read this fable by Aesop. Then answer the questions.



## The Fox and the Crow

A crow was sitting on a branch of a tree. She held a piece of cheese in her beak. A fox caught sight of the crow and began thinking of a way to get the cheese. He went and stood under the tree and looked up. 'What a noble bird I see above me!' he said. 'Her beauty is without equal. The colours of her feathers are so pleasing. If only her voice is as sweet as her looks are fair. She ought, without doubt, to be queen of the birds.'

Now, the crow was greatly flattered by this praise. Just to show the fox that she could sing, she gave a loud caw. Down came the cheese, of course.

The fox snatched up the cheese and said, 'You have a lovely voice, madam, I see. But what you want is wits.'

1. Which of these happened first?
  - (A) The fox stood under a tree.
  - (B) The fox began thinking of a way to get the crow's cheese.
  - (C) A fox saw a crow in a tree.
  - (D) The fox praised the crow's beauty.
2. Right after the crow gave a loud caw,
  - (A) the cheese came down.
  - (B) the fox praised the crow's voice.
  - (C) the fox snatched up the cheese.
  - (D) the fox told the crow she needed wits.
3. Which clue word tells what the fox did last?
  - (A) after
  - (B) last
  - (C) finally
  - (D) There is no clue word.
4. What did the fox do before snatching up the cheese?
  - (A) He sang a sweet song.
  - (B) He said the crow ought to be queen of the birds.
  - (C) He climbed the tree.
  - (D) He scolded the crow.

# The wonders of the human body

Read this article about the human body. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 & 2.

## The Wonders of the Human Body

How the human body works is a mystery to most people. For example, do you know why you blink? Or blush? Or sneeze? For every bodily mystery, there is a scientific answer.

Everyone blinks – thousands of times a day. Blinking is important because it washes tears over the eyeballs. These tears clean away dirt and dust. If you stopped blinking, the outer covering of your eyeballs would dry out and get infected. You might even go blind.

Blushing can be embarrassing, but there's nothing you can do to stop it. People usually blush when someone teases or threatens them. One part of the brain sends a message to another part. The body is told to get ready to defend itself. Extra blood flows to the muscles. When blood rushes to your arms and legs, no one notices it. But there's no hiding the redness in your face.

Sneezing is the way your body protects your lungs. If dust sneaks past your nose to the throat, the brain sends out an alarm. This warning causes the tubes in the throat to tighten so that the dust can't get through to the lungs. But when you try to breathe, pressure builds up in the narrow tubes. When the pressure becomes too great, the tubes are forced open with a quick blast of air. Achooo!



### Recognising Cause and Effect

1. Blinking is important because it
- Ⓐ prevents pressure from building up behind the eyes.
  - Ⓑ tells the body to get ready to defend itself.
  - Ⓒ helps the body protect the lungs.
  - Ⓓ cleans away dirt and dust from the eyes.

### Recognising Cause and Effect

2. What usually happens when people are teased or threatened?
- Ⓐ They blink.
  - Ⓑ They blush.
  - Ⓒ They sneeze.
  - Ⓓ They hiccup.

# Crocodiles and Alligators

**Remember: Comparing is finding ways that things are alike.**

**Contrasting is finding ways that things are different.**

- ★ Look for clue words that signal a likeness, or comparison, such as *both, same, like, alike* and *similar*.
- ★ Look for clue words that signal a difference, or contrast, such as *but, unlike, different, however* and *whereas*.
- ★ Look for people, places, objects and events that are being compared and contrasted.

**Read this article about crocodiles and alligators. As you read, ask yourself, ‘How are these animals alike? How are they different?’ Then answer the questions.**

## Reptile Relatives

Most people can't tell the difference between an alligator and a crocodile. That's not surprising. These large reptiles look a lot alike. Both have four short legs and a long, powerful tail. Their skin is greenish brown and covered with scales. Also, their eyes and nostrils are on top of their head.

There are many ways to tell the two reptiles apart. An alligator has a broader head and a rounder snout. A crocodile has a narrow head and a long, pointed snout. When an alligator's jaws are closed, its lower teeth are hidden. But when a crocodile's jaws are shut, a tooth sticks out on each side.

Both reptiles must live in warm waters to survive. Alligators like only fresh water. Crocodiles, however, sometimes swim out to sea for a short time. Alligators are found in only two places. They live in parts of China and in the southeastern United States. Crocodiles, however, live in many places. They are found in South America, Central America, Africa, Asia and Australia. A few are also found in southern Florida, USA, with their alligator cousins.



1. In what way are alligators and crocodiles alike?
  - Ⓐ Their lower teeth don't show when their jaws are shut.
  - Ⓑ They both have narrow heads.
  - Ⓒ Their eyes and nostrils are on top of their head.
  - Ⓓ They both live only in fresh water.
2. Which clue word signals how the places in which crocodiles live are different from the places in which alligators live?
  - Ⓐ both
  - Ⓑ but
  - Ⓒ different
  - Ⓓ however

# Frogs and toads

Read this chart, which describes some of the ways that frogs and toads are alike and ways that they are different. Then answer the questions.

Quality	Frogs	Toads
Can survive only in moist conditions	✓	✓
Live mostly in water	✓	
Live mostly on land		✓
Are cold-blooded animals	✓	✓
Lay their eggs in the water	✓	✓
Begin life as tadpoles with gills and tails	✓	✓
Adults have lungs instead of gills	✓	✓
Adults have no tail	✓	✓
Use long, sticky tongue to catch insects	✓	✓
Feed mostly on insects	✓	✓
Have moist, smooth skin	✓	
Have dry, bumpy skin		✓
Have long, powerful back legs for leaping	✓	
Have shorter legs		✓
Are excellent jumpers	✓	
Do more hopping than jumping		✓
Colour usually matches their surroundings	✓	✓

- Which of these tells one way that frogs and toads are different?
  - Only frogs lay their eggs in the water.
  - Toads' colour matches their surroundings.
  - Only frogs do more hopping than jumping.
  - Toads live mostly on land.
- One way that frogs and toads are alike is that
  - they have long, powerful back legs.
  - they use their tongues to catch insects.
  - they have moist skin.
  - they live mostly in water.
- Which three qualities do frogs have in common with toads?
  - are cold-blooded, have bumpy skin, colour matches their surroundings
  - lay their eggs in the water, are excellent jumpers, live mostly in water
  - adults have lungs, eat insects, can survive only in moist conditions
  - begin life as tadpoles, adults have no tail, have dry skin
- Which of these is true?
  - Frogs and toads are alike in more ways than they are different.
  - Frogs and toads are different in more ways than they are alike.
  - Toads can do everything that frogs can do and more.
  - Frogs are just like toads, except that frogs lay their eggs in the water.

# Diamonds

Read this article about diamonds. As you read, ask yourself, 'What clues will I use to figure out the meaning of the word *clarity*?' Then answer the questions.

Diamonds are the world's hardest material. Most diamonds formed deep inside the earth about three billion years ago. Lava from volcanoes eventually carried the crystal stones to the earth's surface.

Diamonds are the most highly prized stone. However, they vary greatly in quality. The value of a diamond depends on its colour, clarity, cut and weight.

Most natural diamonds are colourless. Some diamonds, though, have elements that give them colour. Diamonds can be red, yellow, pink, brown, green or blue.

A diamond's clarity is what makes it sparkle brightly or appear dull. Diamonds with good clarity are easy to see through. Diamonds with poor clarity are not easy to see through. The way a diamond is cut helps show off its brightness. The better the cut, the more it shines.

Not all diamonds are used for jewellery. Most diamonds are too small or oddly shaped. But they are still valuable. Diamonds are used to make products such as computer chips. They are also used for cutting strong materials such as rock, glass, steel and even other diamonds.

1. In paragraph 4, *clarity* probably means
  - Ⓐ 'colourfulness'.
  - Ⓑ 'hardness'.
  - Ⓒ 'dullness'.
  - Ⓓ 'clearness'.
2. Which phrase gives a clue to the meaning of *clarity*?
  - Ⓐ sparkle brightly or appear dull
  - Ⓑ most highly prized stone
  - Ⓒ have elements that give them colour
  - Ⓓ the more it shines

# Space stations

Read this article about space stations. Then answer the questions.

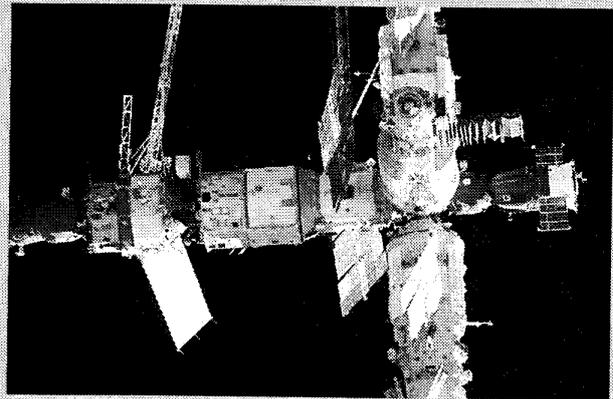
## Space Stations: Past, Present and Future

Scientists believe that huge space stations orbiting Earth will provide a safe way to search the universe. The first space station was launched, in 1971, by the Soviet Union. It was called *Salyut 1*. Three cosmonauts travelled around Earth in the space station for 24 days. Sadly, the three crew members died trying to return home.

Two years later, the United States launched the *Skylab* space station. It went on three missions. A crew of three astronauts carried out each mission. The astronauts performed many important experiments on *Skylab*. Several experiments helped scientists understand how the human body acts in space.

The Russian space station *Mir* was launched in 1986. In time, the space station began to wear out. In March 2001, Russia took *Mir* out of orbit and sent it plunging to Earth.

In 1993, the United States and Russia agreed to build an International Space Station or ISS. To prepare for the project, shuttles flew to *Mir* from 1995–1998. Crews from each country travelled into space to assemble the station. Other nations have since joined the project. Canada, Japan and European countries now help keep the ISS up and running also. Crews from different countries man the space station. They take turns, each crew staying between four and six months.



The ISS orbits about 400 kilometres above the earth. It looks like a bright star moving from west to east.

- In the first paragraph, you can tell that the word *orbiting* means
  - 'exploring'.
  - 'speeding away from'.
  - 'travelling toward'.
  - 'travelling around'.
- In the first paragraph, which word or words give a clue to the meaning of *cosmonauts*?
  - scientists
  - crew members
  - universe
  - space stations
- In paragraph 4, which clue word is a synonym of *assemble*?
  - build
  - travel
  - orbit
  - complete
- In paragraph 4, the best meaning of the word *man* is
  - 'to succeed in doing something'.
  - 'to orbit around Earth'.
  - 'to be in charge of or operate'.
  - 'to supply with equipment'.

# Mount Everest

Read this article about a place of wonder. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 & 2.

## On Top of the World

All mountains must rise at least 600 metres above sea level. Otherwise, they are just hills. The highest mountain in the world is Mount Everest. It stands between Nepal and part of China. Mount Everest is part of the Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range.

Local people call Mount Everest *Chomolungma*. This name means 'Goddess of the Snows'. The name suits the snowy giant. Mount Everest has the highest elevation of any mountain on Earth. Its peak rises about nine kilometres above sea level.

People began trying to climb to the top of Mount Everest in the 1920s. In 1953, two men finally succeeded. Edmund Hillary, of New Zealand, and Tenzing Norgay, a guide from Nepal, became the first people to reach the summit. Since then, hundreds of people have done the same. However, many climbers have also lost their lives on the route.

Mount Everest is the world's most difficult mountain to climb. Scaling it requires special clothing, equipment and skill. The higher a climber climbs, the thinner the air becomes. Thin air is difficult to breathe, therefore climbers must breathe in bottled oxygen. Also, the slopes are covered with deep snow and thick ice. Sometimes, a large mass of snow breaks loose. It causes an avalanche that can sweep climbers down the mountain and bury them.

Another danger for climbers is the climate on top of Mount Everest. Temperatures can drop quickly, and winds can blow at speeds of more than 300 kilometres per hour.



### Finding Word Meaning in Context

1. In paragraph 2, the word *elevation* means
- (A) 'height above 600 metres'.
  - (B) 'height above sea level'.
  - (C) 'height below sea level'.
  - (D) 'height below 600 metres'.

### Finding Word Meaning in Context

2. You can tell that an avalanche is
- (A) a climber who slides down a mountain slope.
  - (B) a deep crack in the ice.
  - (C) a mass of snow that falls down a mountainside.
  - (D) thin air that is difficult to breathe.

# The Titanic

Read this article about the sinking of the *Titanic*. As you read, look for details that will help you figure out who survived the sinking and why. Then answer the questions.

## The Titanic Tragedy

On 10 April 1912, the *Titanic* set off on her first voyage. She was travelling from England to New York. The 2207 passengers on board were filled with excitement. They were on board the finest ocean liner in the world. They were also on the first ship to be declared 'unsinkable'. On the evening of 14 April however, something went terribly wrong. At 11.45 p.m. the *Titanic* struck an iceberg. Within 2½ hours, the ship had sunk and 1502 lives were lost.

The *Titanic* carried enough lifeboats for just 1178 people. However, only about 700 people actually filled the boats that floated away. The crew filling the boats ordered that 'women and children go first'. This rule mostly helped passengers who were travelling in first class. Only four of 143 women in first class died that evening. In second class, 15 of 93 women did not make it. In third class, however, 81 of 179 women were lost. As for the children, all 29 in first and second class were saved. Only 23 out of 76 children in third class survived.

1. From the article, you can tell that the lifeboats were
  - Ⓐ damaged and could not be used.
  - Ⓑ not necessary on most ships.
  - Ⓒ not completely filled with passengers when they floated away.
  - Ⓓ only for those who travelled in first class.
2. Which detail from the article helped you answer question 1?
  - Ⓐ Fewer men than women survived.
  - Ⓑ There were more people in third class than in first class.
  - Ⓒ There were enough lifeboats for 1178 people, but only 700 filled them.
  - Ⓓ Only women and children were allowed to board the lifeboats first.

# Animals that hibernate

## Drawing conclusions

Read this article about winter sleepers. Then answer the questions.

Many animals live in countries where the winter is cold and harsh. There is not enough food to eat. Some animals survive the winter by going into a deep winter sleep called hibernation.

Hibernating animals prepare for their long nap in the late summer or early autumn. First, they eat lots of food. This extra food is stored in their body as fat. Then they choose a warm place where they can safely hide for several months.

When most animals hibernate, their body temperature lowers to almost freezing. This large drop in temperature puts the animals into a sleep-like state. It also causes their heartbeat and breathing to slow. The animals need little energy and can live off their stored fat until spring.

Some animals wake from their sleep several times during the winter. Chipmunks, for example, get up and go out when the weather is mild. They also store real food instead of body fat. Bears usually sleep only through the worst weather in winter. Their body temperature drops only a few degrees. Therefore, they can easily wake from their sleep at any time.



1. You can tell that when animals come out of hibernation,
  - (A) their bodies are very cold.
  - (B) their body temperature rises.
  - (C) they have a hard time staying awake.
  - (D) they return to the north.
2. There is enough information in the article to suggest that hibernators
  - (A) know when to go to sleep and when to wake.
  - (B) travel to warmer places when winter comes.
  - (C) always store enough food to last through the winter.
  - (D) sleep underground.
3. What can you conclude about hibernating bears?
  - (A) Their body temperature is always changing.
  - (B) Their heart beats quicker than that of other hibernating animals.
  - (C) They hibernate longer than most animals.
  - (D) They store supplies of food in their den.
4. You can tell that
  - (A) few animals hibernate in winter.
  - (B) hibernation is the only way for animals to survive the winter.
  - (C) people also have a hard time in winter.
  - (D) only animals that live in places where winters are harsh hibernate.

# Penguins

## Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Read this report on penguins. Then answer questions about the report.  
Choose the best answer for Numbers 1. & 2.

The penguin is the most unusual bird. It walks upright and cannot fly. I think the penguin is the funniest-looking bird in the world. With its black back and white belly, it looks like a small, round waiter wearing a tuxedo. The penguin must be the clumsiest animal on land. It waddles about on two short legs and webbed feet.

Although penguins walk funny and can't fly, they are excellent swimmers. Penguins are more graceful in the water than any other sea animal. Instead of wings, penguins have powerful flippers. They help penguins swim underwater at fast speeds.

Penguins live in cold waters in the Southern Hemisphere. Several kinds live in Antarctica, the coldest place on Earth. Penguins have many layers to protect them from freezing temperatures. Thick layers of fat under thick skin help keep in heat. A thick coat of short, oily feathers keeps their skin dry. Beneath this waterproof coat are downy feathers. They trap warm air around the body.

There are 18 kinds of penguins. The largest is the emperor penguin. It stands about a metre high and weighs about 50 kilograms. It has a collar of bright orange and yellow feathers around its neck. In 1997, scientists in Antarctica discovered an all-white emperor penguin. So far, this rare penguin is the only one of its kind to be seen.

### Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

1. Which of these is an *opinion*?
- Ⓐ Penguins live in cold waters in the Southern Hemisphere.
  - Ⓑ The largest penguin is the emperor penguin.
  - Ⓒ The penguin waddles about on two short legs and webbed feet.
  - Ⓓ I think the penguin is the funniest-looking bird in the world.

### Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

2. Which of these is a *fact*?
- Ⓐ The penguin must be the clumsiest animal on land.
  - Ⓑ Penguins have many layers to protect them from freezing temperatures.
  - Ⓒ Penguins are more graceful in the water than any other sea animal.
  - Ⓓ The penguin is the most unusual bird.

# Moon landing 1969

Read this news story about a historic event. Then answer questions about the news story. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 & 2.

World News

21 July 1969

## Men Land on Moon!

Last night at 10.56 Eastern Daylight Time, astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first person to set foot on the moon. About 600 million TV viewers witnessed the moon landing. It was the proudest moment in American history. As Armstrong placed his left foot onto the moon's surface, he told the world, 'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.' His words will be remembered always.

Minutes later, Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin, Jr, joined Armstrong on the moon's surface. The third crew member, Michael Collins, remained in orbit aboard the command ship, *Columbia*.

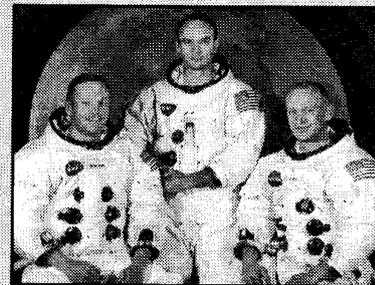
Armstrong and Aldrin are the bravest people alive. They explored the moon for more than two hours. They planted an American flag on the moon's surface. They also took pictures, set up experiments and collected soil and rock samples.

Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins blasted off from Cape Kennedy in *Apollo 11* on 16 July.

The spacecraft travelled at the speed of 10 kilometres per second. Altogether, it took 103 hours and 30 minutes to travel from Earth to the moon.

On 20 July Armstrong and Aldrin went down to the moon's surface in their lunar module, the *Eagle*. They landed on the Sea of Tranquillity. This sea has no water. It is named for one of the flat, dark areas on the moon.

The *Apollo 11* astronauts plan to return to Earth on 24 July. They'll probably receive the best homecoming anyone has ever had. It is believed that these three men will become heroes to every child in the world.



### Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

1. Which statement is a *fact*?

- (A) Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins blasted off from Cape Kennedy in *Apollo 11* on 16 July.
- (B) Armstrong's words will be remembered always.
- (C) Armstrong and Aldrin are the bravest people alive.
- (D) It is believed that these three men will become heroes to every child in the world.

### Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

2. Which of these expresses an *opinion*?

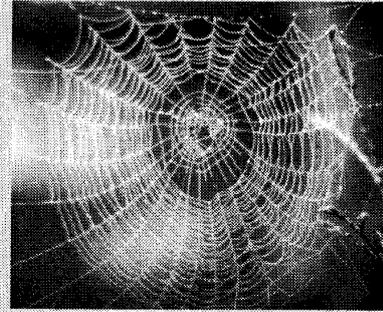
- (A) Armstrong became the first person to set foot on the moon.
- (B) Armstrong and Aldrin explored the moon for more than two hours.
- (C) About 600 million TV viewers witnessed the moon landing.
- (D) It was the proudest moment in American history.

# Spider's webs

Read this article about spiders. As you read, think about the most important ideas in the article. Then think about what you might tell someone who asks what the article is about.

Spiders spin webs that are sticky. They do this so that flies and other insects will become trapped in the web. Once a fly is trapped on the sticky threads, it cannot break free. But how do spiders walk their own webs without getting trapped?

Spiders make several kinds of silk to build its web. One kind of silk is the sticky kind. Spiders use the sticky silk to catch insects. Another kind of silk is not sticky. Spiders use this silk to make the strong supporting threads of the web. Spiders know to walk only on the threads that aren't sticky.



The most important ideas in the article are

**Spiders do not get trapped in their webs, but insects do.**

**Spiders use two kinds of silk to build their webs.**

**Spiders know not to walk on the sticky threads of their webs.**

Here is what you might tell someone who asks what the article is about:

**Spiders do not get trapped in their own webs because they know to walk on the threads that are not sticky, while insects get trapped in the parts that are sticky.**

The sentence above is a summary. A summary is a short statement that tells the main points or important ideas of a reading passage. When you retell the important ideas in one sentence, you are **summarising**.

- ★ A summary is not stated in a reading passage. To create a summary, you must think about and retell the most important ideas.
- ★ A good summary of fiction tells about the main character, the problem and the solution.
- ★ A good summary of nonfiction tells about the main idea of the reading selection, as well as the main ideas contained in the paragraphs.

**Now write a summary of the 'spider's webs' article.**

# Wind and Thunder fable

Read this fable about Wind and Thunder. Then answer questions about the fable. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 & 2.

## The Quarrel Between Wind and Thunder

Wind believed that he worked harder than anyone else. 'I am the one who keeps the earth in good order. I do all of the work.'

Thunder heard this and was instantly upset. 'No you don't,' said Thunder. 'I keep the earth in good order. I do all of the work.' Thunder didn't want anything more to do with Wind. He went far away from Wind.

'I don't need you,' called Wind. 'I do all of the work anyway. I keep the earth in good order. I make the plants grow.'

Wind wanted to show how powerful he was. He began to blow. And blow. Then he blew some more. He kept blowing, but no plants grew. The earth slowly turned brown. The soil was parched. Everything was drying up.

Wind now knew that what he had said was not true. He went to Thunder. 'I cannot do all the work by myself. The earth needs us both.'

Thunder came back. He let out a rumble. And then another and another. Soon rain began to fall to the earth. The earth slowly turned green once again. Wind tagged along behind Thunder, happy to blow among the tall grasses again. This is how Wind and Thunder came to work together to take care of the earth.

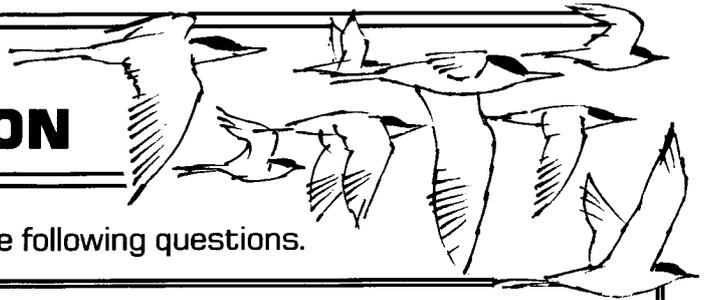
### Summarising

1. What is the main problem in the folktale?
- (A) Wind does not work as hard as Thunder.
  - (B) Wind tries to prove to Thunder that he is more important to the earth.
  - (C) Wind does not make the plants grow.
  - (D) The earth turns brown and everything dries up.

### Summarising

2. What is a good summary of the folktale?
- (A) Wind realises that Thunder does all of the work after all.
  - (B) Wind and Thunder have an argument that is never settled.
  - (C) Wind learns that he needs Thunder to keep the earth in good order.
  - (D) Wind learns that Thunder is more powerful than he is.

## A REPORT – ANIMAL MIGRATION



After reading this report, answer the following questions.

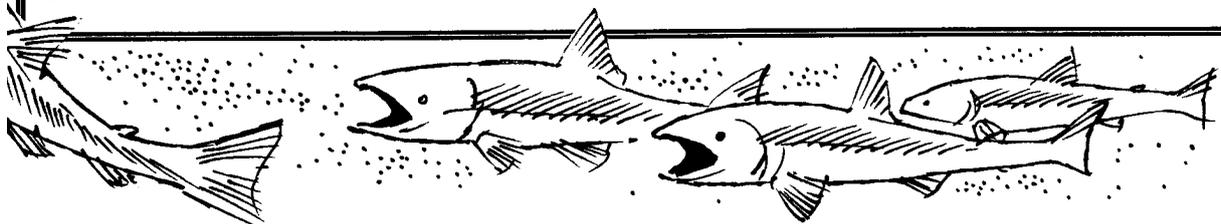
Every year, migrating birds find their way over vast distances with amazing accuracy. The swallow, for example, flies from Australia to Russia every year. It not only returns to the same area of the country, but to the exact place that it built its nest the year before. The Arctic tern breeds in the summer in the northern-most parts of Europe and America and then flies over 18 000 kilometres to the Antarctic continent at the beginning of winter. Many birds use geographical landmarks to help them navigate, but the terns have to fly 3 000 kilometres across the Antarctic Ocean with no landforms to guide them.

Scientists believe that birds navigate in much the same way as sailors did centuries ago – using the sun, moon and stars to guide them. When the weather is cloudy, the birds use the Earth's magnetic field as their guide. Experiments have shown that a bird's brain has a built-in compass.

Even more amazing because of its size, is the journey made by the Monarch or Wanderer butterfly. It flies from its summer home in Canada to Mexico to spend the winter months. Other butterflies and moths, like the Australian Bogong moth, make similar journeys each year.

Migration is common among fish and other marine mammals. For example, Humpback and Southern Right whales migrate from the Antarctic regions to their tropical breeding grounds off the coasts of Australia in late winter and early spring.

Probably the most difficult migration of all is that of the salmon. When it is less than a year old, the young salmon swims downstream and out to sea where it travels thousands of miles, feeding and growing. After years in the ocean, the salmon begins its long return journey, swimming as much as 100 kilometres a day back to the mouth of the river where it was born. Scientists do not know exactly how the salmon finds its way in the sea, although it is thought it uses the sun for navigation. Amazingly, the salmon can find the exact river from which it came. It does this using its keen sense of smell. It then swims up the river to the particular stream where it was born. It takes great strength and endurance for the salmon to battle upstream against obstacles and leap up waterfalls. But the urge to return to its home to find a mate and to spawn drives it on.



# Animal Migration

Write the answers in your work book.



1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.
  - a. migration \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. accuracy \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. exact \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. magnetic \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. marine \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. tropical \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. keen \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. endurance \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. spawn (verb) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name the five species of creatures in the report. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Between which two land masses does the swallow migrate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How do some birds navigate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How do birds navigate when the weather is cloudy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the length of the Arctic tern's migration path? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which animal has the most difficult migration, according to the report?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How far each day does the salmon swim on its return journey? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How does the salmon find its way back to the mouth of the river where it was born? First \_\_\_\_\_  
and then \_\_\_\_\_

## READING FOR DETAILS – MIND MAPS



Read this report about mind maps and then answer the following questions.

Have you ever stopped to think how hard it might be for wild animals and birds to find enough food to eat every day? For creatures living in regions of the world where it snows heavily, the winters can be very harsh, and even life-threatening. Some animals, like the Grey squirrels of North America, store nuts by burying them in the ground so that there will always be a supply of food to last them through the winter months.

Scientists who were studying Grey squirrels wanted to find out if these animals could actually **remember** where they had buried their depots of nuts, or if, because of their sharp sense of smell, they would simply locate nuts belonging to other squirrels as well as their own.

Experiments were set up to find out which theory was correct. The results showed very clearly that each squirrel remembered where its own store of nuts was and even ignored a nearby nut that had been hidden by another squirrel. Instead, it would seek out its own nuts, even if they had been buried further away. The scientists also observed that each squirrel would take a direct route between its various nut depots and rarely retraced its steps.

The conclusion drawn from this observation was that squirrels are able to construct a mental map of their surroundings which shows them where their hidden nut depots are located. In this way, they have no problem in finding their food.

Some native birds, too, seem to remember where food-bearing trees are located, for they return each day at the same time to feast on the nectar or fruit. They then move on to the next food source, which could be quite a distance away.

1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

a. harsh \_\_\_\_\_

b. life-threatening \_\_\_\_\_

c. depot \_\_\_\_\_

d. locate \_\_\_\_\_

e. experiment \_\_\_\_\_

f. theory \_\_\_\_\_

g. ignore \_\_\_\_\_

h. seek \_\_\_\_\_

i. retrace \_\_\_\_\_

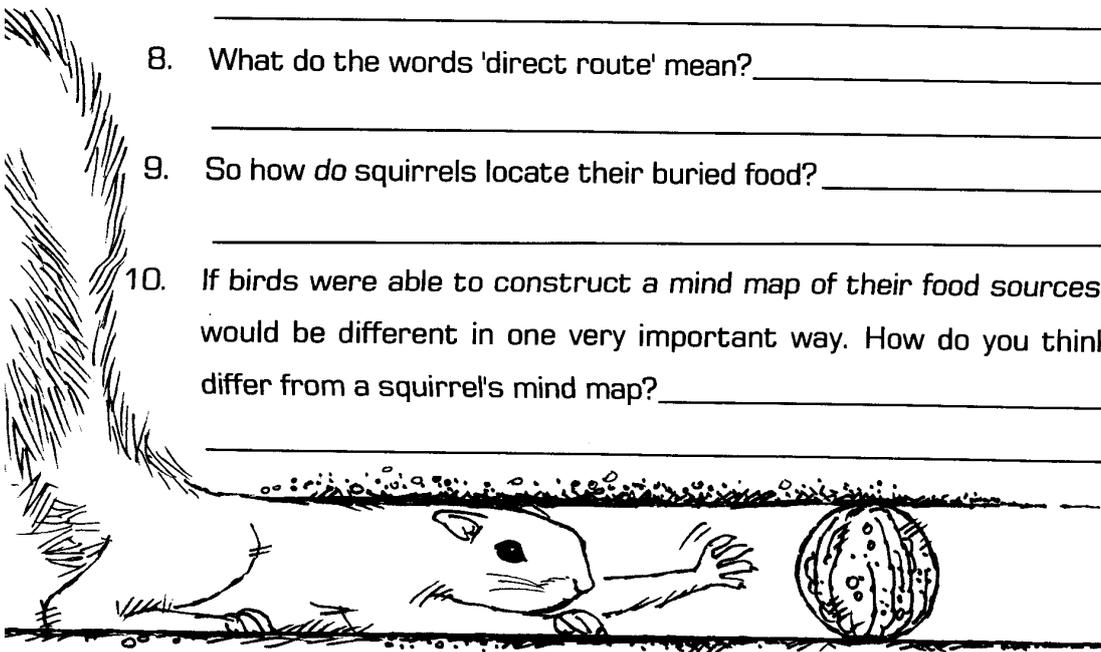
# Mind Maps

j. conclusion \_\_\_\_\_

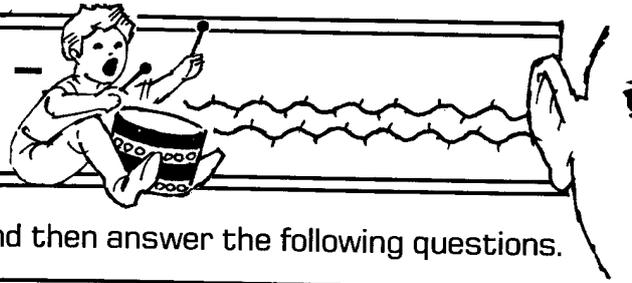
k. observation \_\_\_\_\_

l. nectar \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do you think the winters in places like North America could be life-threatening for animals? Give two reasons. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the scientists want to find out about the Grey squirrels? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In the second paragraph, the adjective 'sharp' is used to describe the squirrels' sense of smell. Use a thesaurus if you need to, to write another word to describe this sense. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did the experiments show that the squirrels could remember where they had buried their own nuts? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If a squirrel found another squirrel's nuts, would it eat them? \_\_\_\_\_  
What would it do instead? Use words from the passage. It would \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think this behaviour shows that squirrels are unselfish creatures? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What do the words 'direct route' mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. So how *do* squirrels locate their buried food? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. If birds were able to construct a mind map of their food sources, the map would be different in one very important way. How do you think it would differ from a squirrel's mind map? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## AN EXPLANATION - WHAT IS SOUND?



Read this explanation about sound and then answer the following questions.

Sound is a type of energy which travels through air, water and even solid objects such as walls. Sounds are made when the tiny particles that make up the air are made to move back and forth very quickly. This movement is called *vibration*.

Sound travels in waves. For example, when you hit a drum, the surface of the drum vibrates and bumps into air particles. These particles bump into the ones next to them and so on, travelling in an expanding circle. Your ears pick up the vibrations in the air and turn them into messages that your brain can understand. When the air particles vibrate slowly, the sound waves are further apart and you hear them as a low-pitched sound, such as the roar of a truck's engine. When the air particles vibrate quickly, the sound waves are closer together and you hear them as a high-pitched sound, such as the whistle of a canary.

Some large animals, such as elephants, can hear sounds lower than our ears can pick up and many small animals, such as bats, can hear much higher sounds than humans.

When sound waves hit a solid surface, like a large outcrop of rock, some of the waves travel through it, but others bounce back, causing an echo, and you hear the sound again. Loud, short sounds make the best echoes. Some fishing boats are fitted with echo-location equipment to find shoals of fish. This equipment sends out high-pitched sounds which bounce off any large masses of fish swimming in the area. A computer on board the vessel interprets the echoes and locates the fish so they can be caught. Dolphins and some bats use echo location to find their food in much the same way.

Sound travels further and faster under water than it does through air. That is why the songs of whales, such as the Humpback, can be heard as far away as 1600 kilometres from where the animal is swimming.

1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

a. particle \_\_\_\_\_

b. surface \_\_\_\_\_

c. outcrop \_\_\_\_\_

d. interpret \_\_\_\_\_

e. locate \_\_\_\_\_

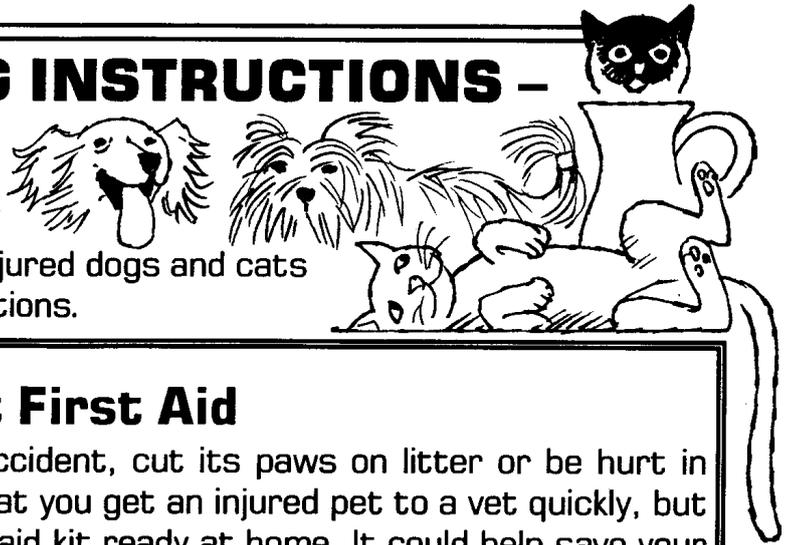


# What is sound?



2. Is it possible for sound to travel through solid objects? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What type of sound is heard when the sound waves are vibrating slowly?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name a high-pitched sound not mentioned in the explanation.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How does an echo occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Give an example of the type of sound that would make a good echo.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is echo-location equipment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What type of people would use it? Name at least two. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What type of animals use echo-location to find their food? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Does sound travel better through air or water? \_\_\_\_\_

# UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTIONS - PET FIRST AID



Read this article about caring for injured dogs and cats and then answer the following questions.

## Pet First Aid

A pet could be injured in a road accident, cut its paws on litter or be hurt in some other way. It is important that you get an injured pet to a vet quickly, but it is also important to have a first-aid kit ready at home. It could help save your pet's life.

### First Aid Kit

Your kit should contain these items:

- small, soft blanket
- gauze squares (sterile if possible)
- elastoplast or adhesive bandage
- sterile gauze bandages: 5 cm and 7.5 cm wide
- scissors
- tweezers
- betadine (iodine) solution

Keep these items in a plastic box with good seals, such as a lunch box.

Label the box 'Animal First Aid'; write your vet's phone number on the label.

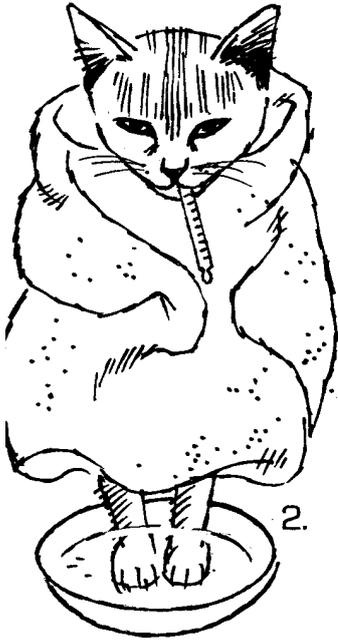
### What to do in case of an accident or injury

1. Try to stay calm and think clearly.
2. If the animal is in shock or pain, it could bite you or run away, so move slowly and speak softly when approaching it. If the dog has no difficulty breathing, a soft muzzle may be made with a gauze bandage. Gently wrap it around the dog's snout and tie underneath.  
In the case of a cat, gently wrap it in a towel or blanket. Make sure you do not restrict its breathing.
3. Check the animal for wounds.
4. Gentle pressure for one or two minutes with a pad of gauze should control minor bleeding. Continued bleeding or deep wounds should be checked by a vet immediately. If the wound is only slight, apply a little betadine on some gauze.
5. Broken bones are extremely painful. Gently place the animal on a blanket and carry it like a hammock with as little movement as possible. If you think the animal has spinal injuries, it should be carried on a hard surface.
6. Shock can kill an animal. If it is in shock, it will have very pale gums, cold paws and be breathing rapidly. Wrap the animal in a blanket and get it to a vet quickly.
7. Wash dog or cat bites gently with betadine. The wound may look small, but it is often quite deep and very painful.

### Prevention is better than cure

Check your pet every day. Look at its eyes, ears, nose, mouth, paws and coat. This makes it easier for you to spot any changes that could be a sign of illness or injury.

During the summer, check for ticks as well.



1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

- a. sterile \_\_\_\_\_
- b. gauze \_\_\_\_\_
- c. adhesive \_\_\_\_\_
- d. muzzle \_\_\_\_\_
- e. restrict \_\_\_\_\_
- f. rapidly \_\_\_\_\_
- g. continued \_\_\_\_\_
- h. minor \_\_\_\_\_
- i. prevention \_\_\_\_\_
- j. tick \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do you think it is important to keep the first-aid items in a well-sealed container? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why should you move slowly when approaching an injured animal? \_\_\_\_\_

4. When is it not a good idea to apply a muzzle to a dog? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Should you apply a muzzle to a cat? \_\_\_\_\_ What should you do instead? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the best way to stop minor bleeding? \_\_\_\_\_

7. If the wound is not deep, how should you treat it? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Should you carry the animal in a hammock if it has injuries to its spine? \_\_\_\_\_ What would be a safe way to move it? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are the signs that an animal is in shock? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What should you check your pet for during the summer? \_\_\_\_\_

# READING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE – FIRE!

Read this important information about fires and then answer the following questions.

Being caught in a fire can be a terrifying experience, and in order to save your life you must act quickly.

In a house fire, smoke and hot air rise and gather near the ceiling of a room. As the amount of smoke in the room increases, the level of smoke gradually moves closer to the floor. Smoke and heat can kill you; you don't have to be near the flames for this to happen. The safest area is just above the floor. This is where the air is coolest and cleanest.

Never waste time getting dressed or looking for precious belongings. Remember the motto: **GET DOWN LOW AND GO, GO, GO!**

Feel every door before you open it. If the door is very hot or if smoke is coming under the door, do not open it, as the fire is right outside. Seal any gaps at the bottom of the door with clothes or bedding. Crawl to the window, open it and escape that way, if possible. Do not jump from second-storey windows but try to make use of balconies or verandah roofs that may be closer to the ground. Once out of the house, stay out. Never try to go back inside, for anything.

If your clothes catch fire, don't panic; **STOP, DROP AND ROLL**. Roll on the ground to smother the flames. A woollen blanket will help to smother the flames as well.

It is said that prevention is better than cure, so here are some hints which will decrease the risk of a fire in the home.

- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Use fireguards in front of open fires.
- Do not run too many appliances from one power socket.
- Never leave anything cooking on the stove unattended.
- Switch off and disconnect all electrical appliances before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Do not place clothing or toys too close to a heater.
- Install smoke detectors in every room.

1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

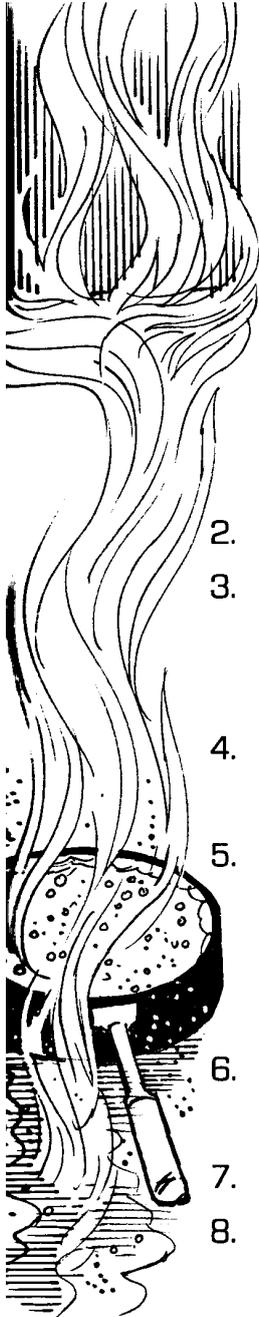
a. terrifying \_\_\_\_\_

b. gradually \_\_\_\_\_

c. precious \_\_\_\_\_

d. storey \_\_\_\_\_

# Fire!



e. motto \_\_\_\_\_

f. balcony \_\_\_\_\_

g. smother \_\_\_\_\_

h. prevention \_\_\_\_\_

i. decrease \_\_\_\_\_

j. appliance \_\_\_\_\_

k. unattended \_\_\_\_\_

l. disconnect \_\_\_\_\_

m. detector \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have to be near flames for the heat from a fire to kill you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where is the safest area for breathing in a fire? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the motto you should remember for escaping from a fire? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How should you check a closed door before opening it? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it important to do this? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What should you do if your clothes catch alight? \_\_\_\_\_

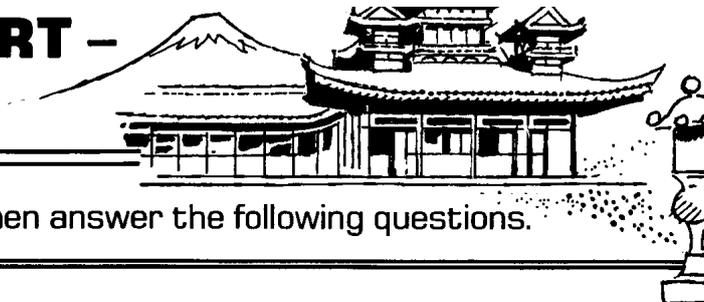
7. What else will help put out the flames? \_\_\_\_\_

8. In your own words, write the meaning of the proverb, 'Prevention is better than cure.' \_\_\_\_\_

9. What could happen if you left something cooking on the stove and left the room or went out? \_\_\_\_\_

- With a partner, research the different types of smoke detectors that are available. Write an explanation about why they are important and how they work.
- Design and illustrate an advertisement for a smoke detector. List its features, cost and why it should be installed in homes.

# READING A REPORT – JAPAN



Read this report about Japan and then answer the following questions.

Japan is made up of four major islands which lie off the north-east coast of Asia in the North Pacific Ocean. The islands are named Shikoku, Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido. They cover an area of 372 300 square kilometres and contain a population of approximately 124 million people.

Japan is a rugged country. About 70% of the land is made up of mountains and hills where there are many forests and rivers. The rivers are quite shallow and are used to irrigate the lower farmlands where rice, wheat, tea, tobacco and fruit trees are grown. The rivers also supply power for hydro-electricity. The major industries of Japan include shipbuilding, car manufacturing, electronic products, iron, steel, clothing, paper products and raw silk.

Japan lies in an unstable part of the Earth where the land is always shifting. This causes many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to occur. There are 150 volcanoes spread across the islands and of these, 60 are active. About 1000 earthquakes occur every year in Japan, and although most of them are minor, every few years there is a major quake. Some earthquakes occur under the ocean, creating huge tidal waves called *tsunami*. These cause much damage and loss of life when they strike the low-lying coastal areas.

Japan's climate is affected by seasonal winds called monsoons. In winter, these monsoons bring cold air and snow to the north of Japan. The summer monsoons bring warm, moist air and cause hot, humid weather. Most areas of Japan receive at least 100 cm of rain annually. Each year, usually at the end of summer, typhoons strike the country. These typhoons bring powerful winds and heavy downpours of rain which damage crops and homes.

1. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of these words.

a. rugged \_\_\_\_\_

b. shallow \_\_\_\_\_

c. irrigate \_\_\_\_\_

d. hydro-electric \_\_\_\_\_

e. electronic \_\_\_\_\_

f. unstable \_\_\_\_\_

g. volcanic \_\_\_\_\_

h. eruption \_\_\_\_\_

# Japan

- i. seasonal \_\_\_\_\_
- j. annually \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Name the islands that make up the country of Japan. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What is the population of Japan? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Name four crops grown in this country. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. How many active volcanoes are there in Japan? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. What is a *tsunami*? \_\_\_\_\_  
What causes one to occur? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. How many earthquakes occur in Japan each year? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. What is another word for 'seasonal winds'? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Name four industries of Japan. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_