

Hummingbirds: Small and Special



Hummingbirds are very special for many reasons. For one, they are very, very small. The smallest kind of hummingbird weighs less than 2 grams. That's less than half the weight of a sheet of paper!

Hummingbirds are also special for the way they fly. They are the only birds that can hover. That means they can stay in one place while flying. Plus, they can fly backwards and even upside down!

All of that flying is supported by a hummingbird's wings. These birds normally beat their wings up to 70 times per second. They can beat their wings much faster when they dive quickly.

How does a hummingbird get all the energy it needs to beat its wings and fly? It gets energy from the food it eats! Hummingbirds get a lot of their food from flowers. They drink nectar from flowers using their long, thin beaks and

When hummingbirds get their food from a flower, they also help the flower. How? By pollinating it! When hummingbirds put their beak into a tube-like flower, some of the flower's pollen can get on them. Then, when they go to sip nectar from another flower, they move the pollen to that new flower. If the pollen lands in the right place in the flower, the plant will grow new seeds. So hummingbirds help lots of plants survive and grow. These birds are truly special!

Choose the right answer:

1. How much do hummingbirds weigh?

- A. more than twice the weight of a sheet of paper
- B. less than half the weight of a sheet of paper
- C. more than twice the weight of a baseball

2. The text lists reasons why hummingbirds are special. What is one of these reasons?

- A. They have beautiful feathers and wings.
- B. They can hover, fly backwards, and even fly upside down.
- C. They have babies that they raise.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"All of that flying is supported by a hummingbird's wings. These birds normally beat their wings up to 70 times per second. They can beat their wings much faster when they dive quickly."

Based on this information, what can we conclude about hummingbirds?

- A. They don't need a lot of energy.
- B. They are lazy birds.
- C. They need a lot of energy.

4. How do hummingbirds help lots of plants survive and grow?

A. Hummingbirds drink nectar from flowers using their long, thin beaks and tube-like tongues.

B. Hummingbirds fly to different flowers to get the food they need so they have a lot of energy.

C. Hummingbirds move pollen from one flower to another flower which helps the plants make new seeds.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

A. Hummingbirds are small special birds that can fly in different ways and help plants make new seeds.

B. Hummingbirds can beat their wings much faster than 70 times per second when they dive quickly.

C. When hummingbirds put their beak into a tube-like flower, some of the flower's pollen can get on them.

Building a Better Bicycle



Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes.

One of the first bicycles was called the hobby horse. It was made of wood! People rode by pushing their feet along on the ground.

Later, a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented. It was not comfortable. It was called the boneshaker. Inventors kept working to make bicycles more comfortable

Next, the high wheeler was developed. It had a very big wheel in the front. This bicycle was not easy to ride, because the rider sat high up on the bike. The rider could be badly hurt in a fall.

Then bicycles began to have two wheels that were the same size. Those bikes looked more like bicycles today.

More than one hundred years ago, bicycles began to have rubber tyres filled with air. That was a solution to the problem of a bumpy ride. The new tyres made riding smoother.

Today, children's bicycles and racing bikes are popular. People ride bikes to get exercise. Bicycling is safer, too. Now people wear helmets, and bikes have reflectors on them.

Choose the correct answer:

1. What was developed more than two hundred years ago?

- A. the first bicycle
- B. the first bike with pedals
- C. the first high wheeler

2. One problem with early bicycles was that they were bumpy to ride. What was used as

the solution to this problem?

- A. bikes with rubber tyres filled with air
- B. wooden bikes without pedals
- C. bikes with metal tyres and pedals

3. Early bicycles were very different from today's bicycles.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- B. People today ride bicycles to get exercise, and wear helmets as they ride.
- C. The hobby horse was made of wood, and people rode it by pushing their feet on the ground.

4. The bicycle with pedals and metal tyres was called the boneshaker. What can you infer about the bicycle based on this name?

- A. It was smooth to ride, but the seat made people's bones hurt.
- B. People liked riding this bicycle more than earlier bicycles.
- C. It was bumpy, shaky, and not comfortable to ride.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Rubber tyres are very important to bicycles today because they make riding smoother.
- B. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- C. Bicycles have changed and gotten better in many ways since they were first developed.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes."

What does the word "developed" most nearly mean here?

- A. created
- B. found
- C. broken apart

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The high wheeler was developed _____ a bicycle that had pedals and metal tyres
was invented.

- A. then
- B. after
- C. before

8. What was one problem with the bicycle called the boneshaker?

9. Why isn't the high wheeler bicycle used by many people today? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. This article is called "Building a Better Bicycle." How have today's bicycles solved the problems of earlier bicycles? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Seeds Need to Move



A plant starts life as a seed. When that seed grows into a plant, that plant makes new seeds. Those seeds, too, can grow and turn into more new plants.

But did you know that not every seed grows into a plant? To become a plant, a seed has to travel. That is because seeds need room to grow. A seed has to be far enough away from other plants so that it gets the sunlight and water it needs. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.

Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!

Many hitchhiker seeds are prickly. They have tiny rows of hooks. The hooks can stick to fur or feathers. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!

Choose the correct answer:

1. What do seeds need to do to become a plant?

- A. stay near other plants
- B. make new seeds
- C. travel away from other plants

2. What kind of seed does this passage describe in detail?

- A. sunflower seed
- B. hitchhiker seed
- C. an animal's seed

3. Some plant seeds are made a certain way so that they will be able to travel.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

A. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.

B. Not every seed grows into a plant, because a seed needs to travel to become a plant.

C. Hitchhiker seeds have tiny hooks so they can stick to animal fur or bird feathers.

4. Why might a seed not grow if it falls to the ground too close to its parent plant?

A. The parent plant might take up all the sunlight and water that the seed needs to grow.

B. The seed might not get pushed into the soil if it falls too close to the parent plant.

C. The parent plant might give the seed all of its water, which is not good for the seed.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

A. A seed has to move far away enough from other plants to become a plant because seeds need room to grow.

B. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body, then fall off and grow into a plant.

C. All seeds grow into plants, but only some plants are able to make new seeds.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!"

What does the phrase "depend on" most nearly mean in these sentences?

- A. move
- B. need
- C. hold

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds."

What does the word "their" refer to?

- A. some plants
- B. animals
- C. the wind

8. What are hitchhiker seeds?

9. Why do seeds need room in order to grow?

10. Read these sentences from the text.

"Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!"

What would a place that is good for the hitchhiker seed to grow be like? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

My Bean Plant

My grandfather loves to grow plants. He raises vegetables and fruits, and he takes great care of all of them. Last week, Grandpa gave me some green bean seeds. Now I can grow my own green bean plant.

I brought my seeds home and showed my mom. She helped me get my green bean project ready. First, we put some soil in a pot. Then we planted a few seeds. I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing! Over the next few weeks, more stems and leaves will grow. Then flowers will grow, too.

What am I most excited about? I cannot wait to eat the beans! I think they will taste even better because I grew them myself.

Choose the correct answer:

1. What did Grandpa give to the main character?

- A. some green beans
- B. green bean seeds
- C. a fully-grown bean plant

2. The main character planted the seeds, put the pot in a sunny spot, and added water.

What was the effect of these actions?

- A. The soil got dry right away.
- B. A tiny stem grew after some time.
- C. The seeds quickly turned into green beans.



3. Read these sentences from the text.

"I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

"I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing!"

What conclusion can you draw from this evidence?

- A. The main character has taken care of many different plants in the past.
- B. The main character is doing a good job of taking care of the bean plant.
- C. The main character doesn't really care about the bean plant.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"I cannot wait to eat the beans! I think they will taste even better because I grew them myself."

Why might the main character think the beans will taste even better because he or she grew them?

- A. because the main character normally hates the taste of green beans
- B. because the main character is way better at growing plants than Grandpa
- C. because the main character put work into taking care of the beans

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. The main character takes care of a green bean seed and helps it start growing into a plant.
- B. The main character's grandfather loves to grow vegetables, and he takes great care of all his plants.
- C. The main character is excited to eat green beans because they are a tasty vegetable.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

"I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing!"

Based on this text, what does the phrase "depend on" most closely mean?

- A. need
- B. like
- C. change

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water."

Now read this sentence about the same information. Then, choose the answer that completes the sentence without changing the meaning from the story.

I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water _____

Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. What do plants need so they can grow?

9. What are two things the main character did to the bean plant to help it grow?

10. What would happen to the bean plant if the main character forgot to give it water?

Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

How bats help us



Have you ever seen a bat before? Bats are the only mammals that can fly. They are nocturnal animals. That means they are awake at night. They do their hunting and feeding after the sun has gone down.

Different kinds of bats eat different things. Some of them eat mostly insects. Others eat mostly fruit. And some eat pollen, nectar, and other parts of flowering plants. All of these kinds of bats are very important. Why?

Bats that eat insects help keep the number of bugs under control. Some of them eat mosquitoes, the nasty pests that feast on blood and spread disease. Because they eat so many bugs, they are great for farming. They eat the bugs that would otherwise eat farmers' crops!

Bats that eat fruit can help spread seeds. Inside a fruit are the seeds of the tree or plant that grew the fruit. When a bat eats the fruit, it does not digest the seed. Instead, the seed leaves the bat as part of its waste. This can happen far away from the tree or plant where the bat first found the fruit.

There, a new tree or plant can grow!

Bats that eat different parts of flowering plants are helpful pollinators. As they go from flower to flower, they move the plant's pollen to different flowers. This makes it possible for the plants to grow new seeds! More than 500 different kinds of plants need bats to pollinate their flowers. They include some kinds of cocoa, bananas, and mangos.

So if you see a bat, remember how much they help out!

Answer these questions:

1. Bats are nocturnal animals. What does this mean?
2. What do bats eat?
3. How do insect-eating bats help us?
4. How do fruit-eating bats help us?
5. How do bat that eat flowers help us?
6. What is the meaning of 'pollinate'?

