

A Bird With a Mask

The tufted puffin is a bird that looks as if it is wearing a mask. It gets its name from the tufts of feathers that the adult bird has sticking up on each side of its head. These tufts are yellow in summer. The face of the tufted puffin is white. It has a bright red beak. It has brown on its back, tail, and wings. It has a dark underbelly.

The tufted puffin nests in holes in rocks or in tunnels it digs near the sea. It lays just one white egg each year. When the baby puffin hatches, it looks like a little fluff ball or a powder puff.

The tufted puffin hunts shellfish when it is hungry. It cracks the shells of crabs, clams, and mussels with its red beak. Then it plucks the food from the shell.

The tufted puffin has been seen on islands from the Arctic Ocean to Japan.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The tufted puffin is a bird with _____ of feathers sticking
_____ on each side of its head.

just, plucks, tufts, up

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The puffin nests in rocks or in _____. Its baby looks like a powder
_____.

just, mussels, puff, tunnels

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The tufted puffin _____ shellfish like crabs, clams, and _____.
fluffs, hunts, mussels, puffs

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

When tufted puffins are _____, they crack open shells and
_____ the food from the shell.

hungry, hunt, mussels, pluck

5. Why does the tufted puffin need its beak?

Word List

hunts	mussels	hungry
bunts	tunnels	hunger
blunts	funnels	hunter
bluffs	puffin	bunter
fluffs	muffin	bummer
puffs	underbelly	summer
huffs	undercut	hummer

A Plant With a Funny Name

Mouse-ear chickweed is a funny name for a plant. This plant got its name from its fuzzy leaves. They look like mouse ears. Its stem is fuzzy also. Rub the stem between your fingers and thumb. It feels sticky.

There are many kinds of mouse-ear chickweed in North America. They grow in clumps in fields. They grow in clusters along the side of the road. Sometimes they get into gardens. People think of them as just weeds. Weeds upset people. It can be frustrating to try to get rid of them once they take root.



You can cook the leaves of the mouse-ear chickweed. They can be eaten with butter. You might like to try them, unless you are a fussy eater. Try them with mashed potatoes at your Sunday lunch. You might like them so much that you want to eat a whole bunch.

Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Mouse-ear chickweed may be a _____ name for a plant, but it is a good one.

This plant has leaves that look like mouse ears. It also has a _____ stem.

bunch, frustrating, funny, fuzzy

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The stem of the mouse-ear chickweed feels sticky when you _____ it between your fingers and _____.

clumps, lunch, rub, thumb

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

People think mouse-ear chickweeds are _____ weeds. These plants grow easily, and _____ people trying to get rid of them.
cluster, fussy, just, upset

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Some people eat mouse-ear chickweeds for _____. They cook them and eat them with _____.
bunches, butter, clumps, lunch

5. Why do some people not like the mouse-ear chickweed?

Word List

lunch	clumps	butter
bunch	chumps	gutter
munch	humps	cutter
much	thumps	clutter
such	thumb	cluster
hutch	crumb	bluster
Dutch	plumb	fluster

A Woman Who Just Said "NO"

Rosa Parks was a hard-working woman, and she was gutsy. One day in Montgomery, Alabama, she was asked to give up her seat on the bus. Rosa Parks just said "No!" Rosa wasn't trying to make a big fuss—she wasn't even flustered. She just would not budge.

The bus driver hustled to where Rosa was seated. He told her she must give up her seat if a white person wanted it. It was the law. Rosa said "No." "Well, I'm going to have you arrested," the bus driver blustered. He called the police, and Rosa Parks was put in jail.

Other African-Americans heard about what Rosa had done. They were inspired by her humble protest. For a long time, no African-American people rode the bus. Some white people also did not ride. The bus lost money. In time, the law was changed. African Americans no longer had to give up their seats to white people. No guns were needed—just one woman who said "No" to the unfair law.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

At one time the law in Alabama was _____. The law said that African Americans must give their _____ seats to white people.

bus, fuss, just, unfair

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

One day, Rosa was asked to give _____ her bus seat. But Rosa would not _____.

budge, fluster, fussed, up

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

People did not need _____ to change the unfair law. They
_____ stopped riding the bus so that the bus lost money.
budge, guns, just, must

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The bus driver _____ to Rosa and said he would have her arrested. But Rosa
was not even _____.

budged, flustered, hustled, unfair

5. What changed because Rosa said "No"?

Word List

bus	must	unfair
fuss	just	unjust
muss	bust	uncut
mutt	budge	unstuck
but	fudge	cussing
hut	judge	fussing
such	nudge	busing

Bubbles to Zubbles

Soap bubbles can be lots of fun. Children have played with them for hundreds of years. Can you think of a way to make them better? In 1994, Tim Kehoe did. That year, he started trying to make colored bubbles.

Tim plunged into his project. He mixed lots of dyes and soaps. He had no luck with Jell-O, food coloring, or ink. While working, he stained many things, like tables, rugs, and tubs. But Tim didn't give up. He kept hunting for a way to make colored bubbles.

In time, Tim was able to make some colored bubbles. He was very excited—until some people grumbled about the marks the bubbles left behind. Tim understood. People would not want to scrub everything that the bubbles hit. He knew he must make his colored bubbles easier to clean.

In 2005, Tim and a scientist did it! They could make stunning colored bubbles. Plus, the bubbles cleaned up easily. Most of the color just disappeared. Water or light rubbing took care of the rest. Tim called his colored bubbles Zubbles.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Tim Kehoe wanted to make colored _____. He _____ into his project and didn't give up until he made Zubbles.

bubbles, grumbled, plunged, tubs

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Tim Kehoe had no _____ with many kinds of dyes. But he kept _____ for a way to make colored bubbles.

bubbles, hunting, luck, stunning

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Before Zubbles, people _____ that Tim Kehoe's bubbles left marks. The people didn't want to _____ everything the bubbles hit.

grumbled, plunged, rubbing, scrub

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Zubbles are soap bubbles that come in _____ colors. Zubbles don't leave marks because most of the color _____ disappears.

just, rubbing, scrub, stunning

5. Write a sentence telling how people cleaned up Zubbles.

Word List

rug	rub	bubble
jug	scrub	rubble
hug	scruff	rumble
hum	huff	grumble
sum	cuff	crumble
sun	cup	stumble
run	up	tumble

Cat Mummies

Long ago in Egypt, cats were thought of as gods. We know this from paintings of cats and cat mummies that are thousands of years old. Cats were thought to bring good luck.

Cats were treated well long ago in Egypt. They were given fish and milk in dishes of gold. It was against the law to kill a cat.

When a cat died, the family cut off their eyebrows. Then they went around looking sad. They were sad until their eyebrows grew back.

When a cat died, its body was wrapped in cloth. The cloth was red, yellow, and black. It was dipped in special drugs. The cat's body did not rot. The cloth became hard. Then it was painted with cat-like eyes and ears. A pretty collar was put around its neck. It was set into a wooden box and buried. Sometimes mouse mummies were buried with the cat mummy. These were for the cat to eat in its next life.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Thousands of years ago in Egypt, people thought cats could bring them

_____ . They treated cats like _____ .

fish, gods, luck, mummies

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

People fed cats from _____ of gold. People could not _____

cats.

cloths, cut, dishes, kill

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

When a cat died, the family wrapped its body in cloth that was dipped in special
_____ so that the cat's body would not _____.

box, dishes, drugs, rot

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

People set the cat's _____ in a _____ and buried it.
box, cloth, dishes, mummy

5. Why were cats treated well a long time ago in Egypt?

Word List

luck	cloth	dipped
duck	sloth	dripped
dug	broth	whipped
drug	froth	wished
jug	frost	swished
jut	lost	dished
cut	cost	fished

How to Become a Rock Hound

Looking for a new hobby? How about becoming a rock hound? A rock hound is someone who looks for rocks. Rock hounds look along roads. They look next to lakes and ponds. They look in their own backyards. Rock hounds sometimes buy odd rocks at rock shops.

To be a rock hound, you need a bag to collect the rocks. You need a small tool to dig rocks out of the dirt. You need a cloth to clean the rocks. Some rock hounds use a rock polisher to polish their rocks.

Rock hounds try to spot rocks that have odd shapes and colors. Rocks that are covered with small dots, like birds' eggs, are odd.

Some rock hounds split their rocks into three boxes. One box is for igneous rocks. One is for sedimentary rocks, and one is for metamorphic rocks. If you want to be a rock hound, you can get a book about these three kinds of rocks.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Being a rock hound is a fun _____ . If you want to become a rock hound, you could start to collect _____ .

hobby, polisher, rocks, spots

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

You can hunt for _____ rocks along roads. Put the rocks you find in a _____ .

odd, polished, polisher, ponds

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Rock hounds hunt for rocks next to lakes and _____. Sometimes rock hounds buy odd rocks in _____.
covers, polishers, ponds, shops

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Buy a book to learn about three kinds of _____. Then split the rocks you collect into _____.
boxes, rocks, shops, spots

5. How are some odd rocks and some birds' eggs alike?

Word List

ponds	shops	hobby
bonds	hops	bobby
blonds	pops	lobby
blocks	pots	knobby
locks	spots	holly
rocks	shots	polish
crocks	dots	polisher

Monkeys

Monkeys are fun to observe. Sometimes they act like people. They can peel bananas and other fruit. They can drink pop from a bottle. People have opposable thumbs. So do some monkeys. This kind of thumb helps fingers hold objects.

There are different kinds of monkeys. Monkeys that live in Africa and Asia are called Old World monkeys. New World monkeys live in South America.

The nostrils of Old World monkeys are close together. They face down and out. Some Old World monkeys have long tails. They live in the tops of trees. Some do not have tails, so they live on the ground. Old World monkeys are stronger than New World monkeys.

The nostrils of New World monkeys are not close together. They face sideways. All New World monkeys have long tails. They live in the tops of trees. They are smaller than Old World monkeys.

Next time you go to the zoo, stop and observe the monkeys. It may seem odd, but they are a lot like people.

Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

It is fun to _____ monkeys. They do many _____ things.
object, observe, odd, stronger

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Monkeys can hold _____ with their thumbs and fingers. They can drink pop from a _____.



bottle, lot, objects, stopper

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

New World monkeys always have _____ tails, so they can live in the _____ of trees.

long, odd, stronger, tops

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Old World monkeys do _____ all have tails, so only some live in trees. Old World monkeys are _____ than New World monkeys.

not, objects, odder, stronger

5. How are the faces of Old World monkeys different from the faces of New World monkeys?

Word List

top	long	stronger
stop	song	monger
pop	tong	longer
pot	strong	hopper
not	prong	topper
lot	prom	stopper
slot	prop	shopper

Pueblo Indian Dances

Dancing is one way that Pueblo people honor their gods. It is one way they ask for help with their lives.

The corn dancers ask the gods for sun and rain. Sun and rain are needed to grow crops. The dancers are painted white with black stripes or spots. Their hair is tied up with corn husks.

Animal dancers ask for help with the hunt. They dress like the animals they hunt. They tap sticks together to make the sound of hooves.

The eagle dancers ask for help for people who are sick. The dancers cover themselves with feathers. They act out the eagle's flight.

The hoop dancers honor the Great Spirit. The dancers jump in and out of many flashing hoops. These dances are danced today at sacred powwows.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The Pueblo people dance to ask their _____ for help and to _____ them.

animals, crops, gods, honor

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Corn dancers paint themselves white with _____ spots. When they dance, they ask their gods to bring sun and rain for their _____.
animal, black, crops, flashing

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Animal dancers _____ like animals. They _____ sticks together to make the sounds of animal hooves.

dress, flash, help, tap

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Eagle dancers dance to _____ their gods for _____ for sick people.

act, ask, dress, help

5. How do animal dancers show their gods what they want?

Word List

ask	help	crops
task	whelp	props
tack	yelp	prods
tact	yes	pods
act	mess	gods
at	dress	got
that	press	spot

The Bobcat

The bobcat got its name from its short tail. It looks as if it has been cut off, or bobbed. The bobcat is sometimes called a wildcat.

The bobcat's body gets to be 25 to 40 inches long. It weighs from 15 to 35 pounds. A bobcat is bigger than a good-sized house cat. It is brown on top with black spots. It has a white belly. Its tail is black at the tip.

Bobcats can be spotted all over North America. They make their dens in hollow logs and caves. They can be seen sunning themselves on top of flat rocks. They can be seen running over hill tops.

Bobcats are nocturnal animals. Nocturnal animals sleep most of the day. Bobcats go out at night to look for birds and small animals to eat.

Mother bobcats have two to four kittens in a litter. Kittens stay with their mom for about a year.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Bobcats are brown with black _____. They can be seen running over the _____ of hills in North America.

off, spots, spotted, tops

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

A bobcat may make its home in a _____ log. Bobcat kittens live in the home with their _____ for about a year.

body, hollow, mom, top

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Bobcats are _____ animals. During the day, they sun themselves on flat
_____.

hollow, longs, nocturnal, rocks

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The _____ of a bobcat is about 25 inches _____.

body, hollow, long, spotted

5. How are the tails of bobcats different from the tails of most housecats?

Word List

top	logs	hollow
hop	fogs	follow
hot	bogs	spotted
got	togs	slotted
lot	tongs	bobbed
slot	longs	sobbed
spot	songs	mobbed

The Common American Robin

You have probably seen an American robin. There are a lot of them in North America.

The American robin is a brown bird with a fox-red breast. Young robins can be hard to spot because they do not have the red breast. They are brown with blotches of white. Their colors help them hide in the nest.

The robin eats worms and fruit. You have probably seen a robin bob along, then stop. It cocks its head as if it can hear the worm under the earth. It does not hear the worm. It spots it with its eyes.

The robin makes a round nest of sticks and mud. It lays three or four blue eggs at a time. The nest is often robbed by big birds and cats. The robin lays eggs two times a year.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

You can probably _____ a grown-up American robin. Its breast is the color of a _____.

blotches, fox, rob, spot

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

It can be hard to _____ a young robin. A young robin's breast has brown and white _____.

blotches, lot, probably, spot

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Big birds and cats try to _____ nests. The color of a young _____ helps it hide in the nest.

bobbed, probably, rob, robin

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Robins _____ along, hunting for worms. Robins do _____ hear worms; they use their eyes to spot them.

blotches, bob, not, probably

5. How are young robins different from older robins?

Word List

bob	robbed	along
rob	bobbed	long
lob	sobbed	log
lot	socked	lot
slot	cocked	lox
spot	clocked	fox
shot	flocked	box

The Ink Pen—A Little History

Think of all the different types of pens we use for writing. There are fat pens and thin pens. There are ballpoint and felt-tipped pens. There are pens with every color of ink.

Pens were first used more than five thousand years ago. The Egyptians had just made the first paper from papyrus. The first pens were thin reeds. The tips were dipped in ink. Reeds were used for pens for thousands of years.

The next pens were quills. People began to use quills more than a thousand years ago. Quill pens were made from goose feathers. Metal points called nibs were put on the ends. They were dipped in ink.

The first pens that held ink were made about two hundred years ago. The ink was poured into the pens with eyedroppers.

Most people did not use the ballpoint pen until the 1940s. Later, felt-tipped pens also came into use.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The first pens were _____ reeds. The Egyptians dipped the reeds into _____ and wrote with them on papyrus.
felt, ink, quill, thin

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

More than a thousand years ago people started using goose _____ for writing.
These pens had metal points on the _____ that were dipped into ink.

ends, held, quills, tipped

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

About two hundred years ago, people made the first pens that _____ ink.

These kinds of pens did not need to be _____.

dipped, held, tipped, with

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Ballpoint pens and pens with _____ tips both showed up
_____ just the last hundred years.

ends, felt, in, quill

5. Why is it easier to write with pens today than it was many years ago?

Word List

ends	quills	tipped
bends	wills	dipped
belt	ills	nipped
felt	ink	sipped
melt	think	sinned
meld	thin	thinned
held	in	chinned

The Moose of Alaska

You can spot them standing under the aspens. You can see them eating next to lakes.

A moose grows up to seven feet tall. It can weigh more than a thousand pounds. It is an odd-looking member of the deer family. It has a humpback.

It has rabbit-like ears. It has a small rump and long, thin legs. Its thick coat keeps it warm through Alaska's bitter cold winters. With its long legs it can run very fast. It can walk in deep snow.

The moose eats sticks. It eats grasses and young trees. It can stand on its back legs to eat leaves from the tops of trees that are ten feet high.

Alaska is a paradise for moose. More than 90 percent of the land is still uninhabited.



Quiz Questions

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Moose are big animals that are _____ of the deer family. They weigh 2,000 pounds and stand _____ feet tall.
legs, members, seven, ten

2. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Moose have long, _____ legs that help them run fast and walk in deep snow.
When the winter is bitterly cold, the moose's _____ coat helps keep it warm.
rump, sticky, thick, thin

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Moose live near _____ trees and lakes in Alaska. Most of their land is still _____.

aspen, bitter, seven, uninhabited

4. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Moose eat grasses and _____. They stand on their back _____ to reach the tops of trees.

legs, rabbits, rumps, sticks

5. Why are moose able to live well in Alaska?

Word List

leg	thin	humpback
beg	pin	humbug
peg	tin	hubcap
pen	tick	rubout
ten	stick	runoff
then	trick	sunlit
them	thick	uphill