

Name: _____

A Mob of Meerkats

By Guy Belleranti



On a large rock in the dry grasslands of southern Africa, a few slender, foot-tall meerkats stand upright on their rear legs. Their statue-like stances, along with their small pointed faces and large eyes, make a cute picture. However,



Preview

Please log in to download the printable version of this worksheet.

is approaching from the air than if the danger is coming from on land. Mob members usually run for the safety of their extensive underground burrows and tunnels. Sometimes, however, they stand together, hissing, until the predator leaves.

Inside the burrows, other mob members watch over newborns and juvenile meerkats. The burrows have many entrances and exits. The deeper tunnels have comfortable year-round temperatures.

A meerkat mob has several burrow systems. The meerkats move from one system to another every few months. They often occupy burrows previously dug by ground squirrels or other animals. However, meerkats are also well adapted for creating or extending burrows. They have long claws for digging. They also have clear membranes covering their eyes, and ears that close to keep out dirt.

More fun meerkat facts:

- Meerkats are diurnal. This means they are active during the day. When they emerge from their burrows each morning they like to stretch out on their backs and warm up in the sun.
- Although the name “meerkat” might make you think they’re related to cats, the meerkat is actually related to the mongoose.
- The dark fur around a meerkat’s eyes diminishes the sun’s glare.
- Meerkats can be vicious fighters. When members from two different mobs clash over territory, some might not survive.
- Meerkats have an excellent sense of smell. This helps them find food even



Preview

Please log in to download
the printable version of this worksheet.



Name: _____

A Mob of Meerkats

By Guy Belleranti



1. According to the article, which of the following is **not** a way meerkats would react to a predator?
 - a. Meerkats might run to the safety of their burrow.
 - b. Meerkats might climb a tree to escape a predator.
 - c. A guard meerkat might call out an alarm.



Preview

Please log in to download
the printable version of this worksheet.

4. If you see a group of meerkats standing very straight on their hind legs, what are they most likely doing?
 - a. sunbathing
 - b. sniffing out prey to eat
 - c. watching for predators
 - d. socializing with each other

5. According to the information in the article, how are the internal clocks, or active and resting times, of meerkats similar to those of humans?

Name: _____

A Mob of Meerkats

By Guy Belleranti

Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.



1. _____ diminishes

a. a young animal



Preview

Please log in to download the printable version of this worksheet.

5. _____ dominant

e. violent; cruel

6. _____ juvenile

f. active during the day

7. _____ occupy

g. a thin structure that acts as a boundary in an organism

8. _____ mongoose

h. a wild dog that lives in Africa

9. _____ diurnal

i. gracefully thin; slight

10. _____ membrane

j. reside in a certain place

Name: _____

A Mob of Meerkats

By Guy Belleranti

In the article, "A Mob of Meerkats," you learned that meerkats use teamwork to protect the mob from predators, take care of young, and dig extensive burrows.

Choose another animal species that demonstrates teamwork in its everyday living. How does that animal species work together with others of its kind? Give examples of



Preview

Please log in to download the printable version of this worksheet.

A Mob of Meerkats



Preview

Please log in to download
the printable version of this worksheet.



5. According to the information in the article, how are the internal clocks, or active and resting times, of meerkats similar to those of humans?

Both meerkats and humans are diurnal, meaning they are both active during the day.

A Mob of Meerkats



Preview

Please log in to download
the printable version of this worksheet.



9. f. diurnal

i. gracefully thin; slight

10. g. membrane

j. reside in a certain place