

Assessment Answer Key

Get to Know Birds!

Note to teachers: The assessment should be used not as a pass-or-fail unit test but as an opportunity to diagnose students' language arts and science skills. We have designed it for students to have their copies of the "Plants Are for the Birds!" student magazine available for reference as they work on answering the questions. Please use the assessment diagnostically. With struggling readers, take the opportunity to review their answers individually. We hope that the answer key provides suggestions that will help you improve students' reading. The assessment also can be given aloud as part of a class discussion. Most of all, we hope the assessment—and the entire Audubon Adventures program—will develop students' appreciation for and enjoyment of the environment we share.

1. Correct answers: a, b, c, d. All of the ideas expressed in the answers are found on page 2 of the student magazine in "The Native Connection." This question and its answers address the fundamental concept students should take away from this unit: Native birds and other wildlife need native plants to survive and thrive, and for birds, that "partnership" is especially powerful. Many students will probably get this question correct using prior knowledge. When a student fails to recognize one of the choices as a correct answer, take the opportunity to elicit the student's reasoning so you can address the underlying issue that led to the incorrect choice.

2. Correct answer: c. The answer is found in "Caterpillar Math: A Tale of Two Trees" on page 2 of the student magazine. There may be several reasons students get this question wrong. If they chose either a or d as the correct answer, chances are they were guessing and/or answering hastily. A deeper problem could be that those students have not grasped an idea that is both expressed and implied in the student magazine: What a plant looks like doesn't tell you whether or not it is native or beneficial for birds and other wildlife. Students might struggle more with the choice between answers b and c. If students haven't understood that caterpillars are a "good" thing for birds and/or did not comprehend the explanation that ginkgo trees are nonnative and not beneficial, then answer b would seem like the correct answer. To choose the correct answer, c, students need to make the conceptual connection—explained in the student magazine—between the eggs of butterflies and moths and benefits for birds. In other words, they need to understand that butterfly and moth eggs lead to caterpillars, and birds eat caterpillars. A discussion about the various choices for this question can reinforce the idea that native birds and native plants have a connection that is like a partnership that benefits both. One aspect of that partnership is that native oak trees are host to many caterpillars, which are an important food source for birds.

3. Correct answer: b. The answer is found in "Who Needs Weeds?" on page 3 of the student magazine. A wrong answer here is probably due to guessing, although the wrong answers tempt students to rely on conventional thinking about what a weed is. The theme of what is or is not a "weed" can lead to a fun class project in which students take photos or make drawings of different plants they think might be weeds and then engage in research to identify the plants and whether or not they are native and/or beneficial.

4. Correct answer: b. The information needed to answer this question correctly is found in "Beware! Invasive Plants!" on page 3 of the student magazine. A wrong answer indicates students are either guessing or using faulty reasoning, rather than comprehending the text. The question challenges students to make a conceptual connection: If native animals can't or won't eat a plant, that plant's growth can spread unchecked and cause problems in a habitat.

5. Correct answer: a. The "true" statements (b, c, d) in this question are found in "The Native Connection" on page 2 of the student magazine. That feature also explains why answer a is "false." To answer this question correctly, students must first understand that they are looking for a statement that is false. The main idea is that birds and other animals cannot survive without plants, even if they don't directly depend on plants for food. This is the fundamental idea that underlies the concept of a food chain or food web. Students must reach the correct answer through a process of elimination—that is, by determining that answers b, c, and d are true, and then reasoning that answer a is false. This is an excellent starting point for a discussion of photosynthesis and the flow of energy through food webs and food chains.

6. Answers will vary. In order to give an adequate answer, students first need to understand that a "healthy habitat" is one in which native plants live with native birds and other creatures and share a connection that benefits both. Positive actions to benefit habitats described in the student magazine include planting native plants (throughout the magazine), avoiding the use of chemicals to kill "pests" ("What's Best for Pests?", page 3), avoiding or removing nonnative invasive plants ("Beware! Invasive Plants!", page 3, and "A Friend to Plants Is a Friend to Birds," page 4), and making a seed ball to plant native plants ("A Friend to Plants Is a Friend to Birds," page 4). Look for at least two of these ideas in students' answers, as well as other reasonable ideas they might come up with on their own.