

Assessment Answer Key

At Home in a Habitat

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 comprehension, knowledge, and skills. We have designed it for students to have their copies of "At Home in a Habitat" 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 answer: c. The answer is found in the first sentence on page 1 of the student magazine. The concept of habitat as the place that provides what an organism needs to survive is reinforced throughout the magazine. Choosing answer *a* suggests guessing or that the student does not grasp the concept, also expressed in the student magazine, that a healthy habitat is home to a variety of plants and animals. Answer *b* is something of a trick, and choosing it is a good indication of guessing and that the student is associating the word "habit" with "habitat." Students who choose this answer are not comprehending the question or the content of the magazine, and may need individual help. Answer *d* is wrong, but it might be chosen even by thoughtful students who are thinking about a comfortable climate rather than the essential elements of a healthy habitat. To explore the depth of students' understanding of the definition and concept of "habitat," follow up by asking them to give examples of different animals and the different kinds of places animals live in all over the world (desert, rainforests, oceans, the arctic, swamps, and so on). The concept "habitat as home" is key to understanding other important life science concepts such as food chains, food webs, the interdependence of species, and the ways human activities can affect natural systems.

2. Correct answer: a, b, c, d. All of these examples of kinds of habitat are mentioned in the first paragraph of "Habitat Means Home" on page 2 of the student magazine. You might have small-group or whole-class discussions about the characteristics of these habitats. Follow up by asking students to name as many other examples of habitats they can think of, making a list for the class to evaluate in a class discussion. Students are likely to come up with a lot of correct examples not expressly given in the student magazine. You might continue the discussion and reinforce the concept by asking students to compare the habitat requirements of domestic animals and people with those of wild animals. What happens when the needs of people conflict with the needs of a healthy natural world?

3. Correct answer: c, d. This challenging question requires careful consideration and accurate reading comprehension. Answers

a and *b* are incorrect, but they contain action verbs, which may tempt students to choose them if they are guessing. The information needed for choosing the correct answers is found in "Habitat Outside Your Window" on page 2. Students who answer hastily may think that removing fallen limbs and leaves—in other words, what we conventionally think of as cleaning up the yard—are reasonable actions. However, the first paragraph of "Habitat Outside Your Window" explains that tree limbs and leaves provide food and shelter for a variety of small organisms. This could serve as a way to introduce the idea of microhabitats for further exploration. The second paragraph of that same article contains both of the correct answers. The importance of keeping cats indoors may be novel and surprising to students, but it can lead to a valuable discussion of native vs. nonnative species and predatory/prey relationships. Domestic cats are technically nonnative species that prey on native species, especially birds.

4. Correct answer: b, c. The answers are found in "The Trouble with Trash" on page 3 of the student magazine and the cartoon "The Tap Is Where It's At!" A careful reading of the question, answer options, and text, as well as conceptual understanding, are required to get this one right. The question can lead to valuable discussions focused on all four answer options. Because bottled water is so ubiquitous now, it is probably easy for students to grasp the magnitude of the problem. Even if the throw-away bottles are destined for recycling, the use of energy involved is an environmental problem. The student magazine doesn't deal with the science behind composting, so this could lead to an ongoing project for the class or school. It's an opportunity to extend students' understanding of decomposition and recycling of nutrients. Another research project might focus on how your town or city deals with recycling of specific materials: plastic, paper, metal, and glass. Regarding burning, some communities allow burning of trash, so you might want to consider this option on a larger scale in a discussion.

5. Answers will vary, but the key to look for is that students realize that they and their families can take part in activities to protect habitat. Examples are introduced in various places in the magazine: community action to protect natural areas ("Habitat Means Home"), providing healthy habitat in yards ("Habitat Outside Your Window"), dealing with trash in environmentally friendly ways ("The Trouble with Trash," "Habitat Heroes," "The Tap Is Where It's At!") Students may also mention activities that are referred to indirectly, such as trying to protect forests from fragmentation, preventing air and water pollution, and so on. And they may come up with some ideas of their own! For a class discussion, challenge students to think of the responsibilities of individual citizens, young and old alike, to care for the environment, and extend the discussion to how being responsible in this way helps not only the natural world, but the entire community of people as well—a key civics concept.