

Animal Studies

5th Grade Nonfiction

Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education, may be used with citation.

Animals are wonderful. If you look closely at how they live, you will find many surprises. It is hard to look closely at insects, because they are very small. Plus, many of them fly away when you come near. But if you have a chance to watch them, you will discover how they live. Watching animals is a job that scientists do, called making observations. They have learned a lot about animals.

Scientists learn about tiny animals, and they have studied insects. They found that insects have tools, and they use those tools to survive. For example, they learned about the sawfly. This is just one animal they have studied.

They call it the sawfly because it possesses a kind of saw. It's not a real saw, but it resembles one, and it works like one. It is actually a part of the sawfly's anatomy. The sawfly uses the saw to make places where the eggs will be safe. It saws at plants in order to create a space where eggs can go. Afterward, the sawfly does something very special. It makes a sort of homemade glue that fastens the eggs where they are laid. We are not exactly sure how it does that, but if you can watch the sawfly you will see this happen.

Some insects have cutting instruments that work in a similar way to scissors. The poppy-bee is one of these insects. It is a bee that makes its home in wood. This bee has a boring tool, and it uses the tool to bore into old wood. It looks like a tool that a carpenter might use. Carpenters make things out of wood, and like carpenters, poppy-bees makes their nests out of wood.

In addition to insects, scientists observe birds, too. They have studied birds using their bills to get what they need. Some birds use their bills to cut into wood. They have sharp bills, and are able to cut a hole in a tree. So, they will use their sharp bills to drill a hole to get inside the tree where insects live, and then they eat the insects.

Every animal is amazing. Even dogs and cats can surprise you. The more you observe animals, the more you will learn. Nature is full of surprises. Every part of every animal has a purpose. Scientists learn more about them every day. Nature is a wonderful part of our world.

Infer and Support the Main Idea - Nonfiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?

- a. Insects are small.
- b. You need to be careful to watch insects.
- c. You can learn by observing animals.
- d. It is hard to study insects.

3. What is the main idea of the whole passage?

- a. Animals are wonderful.
- b. Birds eat insects.
- c. Scientists learn about animals.
- d. Animals do many things.

2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?

- a. Scientists observe animals.
- b. Insects have tools.
- c. The sawfly has a kind of saw.
- d. Sawflies are like parrots.

4. What is another good title for this passage?

- a. How Insects Live
- b. Insects and Birds
- c. Learning about Nature
- d. Tools of Insects

5. *Write your own answer to this question. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	c	b	c	c

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.
Answers may include that scientists learn about nature.