

• Reading Comprehension 3 Level 4

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Most human beings are awake during the day and sleep all night. Owls live the opposite way. Owls are **nocturnal**. This means that they sleep all day and stay awake at night. Because owls are nocturnal, this means they must eat at night. But finding food in the dark is difficult. To help them, they have special eyes and ears.

Owls have very large eyes. These eyes absorb more light than normal. Since there is little light during the night, it is helpful to be able to absorb more of it. This helps owls find food in the dark.

Owls also have very good hearing. Even when owls are in the trees, they can hear small animals moving in the grass below. This helps owls catch their **prey** even when it is very dark.

Like owls, mice are also nocturnal animals. Mice have an excellent sense of smell. This helps them find food in the dark.

Being nocturnal helps mice to hide from the many different animals that want to eat them. Most of the birds, snakes, and lizards that like to eat mice sleep at night—except, of course, owls!

Questions

- 1) In paragraph 1, we learn that "Owls are nocturnal." The word *diurnal* is the opposite of the word **nocturnal**. Using information in the passage as a guide, we can understand that an animal that is *diurnal*
 - A. sleeps at night and is awake during the day
 - B. hunts during the day and is awake at night
 - C. sleeps every other night and is awake during the day
 - D. hunts during the day and night

- 2) Based on information in paragraph 2, it can be understood that an animal with small eyes
 - A. must be diurnal
 - B. has trouble seeing in the dark
 - C. can see very well at night
 - D. is likely to be eaten by an owl

- 3) According to the passage, owls can find food in the dark using their sense of
 - I. sight
 - II. sound
 - III. smell
 - A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

- 4) In paragraph 3 the author writes, "This helps owls catch their prey even when it is very dark." Based on its use in the passage, we can understand that **prey** is
- A. a noise that an animal makes during the night
 - B. a small animal such as a pet dog or cat
 - C. an animal that is hunted by other animals
 - D. an animals that hunts other animals
- 5) Based on information in the final paragraph, it can be understood that mice sleep during the day in order to
- A. find food that other animals can not
 - B. keep themselves safe
 - C. store energy for night time activities
 - D. release stress
- 6) Based on information in the final paragraph, it can be understood that
- A. owls hunt mice
 - B. mice can hide from owls
 - C. mice and owls both hide from birds, snakes, and lizards
 - D. birds and snakes often hunt lizards
- 7) If added to the end of this passage, which of the following conclusions would fit best?
- A. The owl is a nocturnal animal. This means it is active at night. The owl's excellent sense of sight and sound enable it to find food in the dark.
 - B. Mice are nocturnal animals. This means they are active at night. Similar to the owl, mice use their excellent sense of smell to find food in the dark.
 - C. Both mice and owls are nocturnal. This means they are active at night. Because these animals are active at night, they must sleep during the day. This makes them especially vulnerable to attack from diurnal animals.
 - D. Some animals are nocturnal. This means they are active at night. The owl and the mouse are good examples of nocturnal animals that use their senses to find food in the dark.

Answers and Explanations

1) **A**

nocturnal (*adjective*): active by night, happening during the night.

diurnal (*adjective*): active by day, happening during the day.

In paragraph 1 the author writes, "Owls are nocturnal. This means that they sleep all day and stay awake at night." If diurnal is the opposite of nocturnal, then a diurnal animal would sleep all night and stay awake during the day. Choice **(A)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **B**

In paragraph 2 we learn that "Owls have very large eyes. These eyes absorb more light than normal. Since there is little light during the night, it is helpful to be able to absorb more of it." Using this information, we can understand that an animal that has small eyes has trouble seeing in the dark. This is because small eyes are able to absorb less light than large ones. Choice **(B)** is correct. **(A)** is incorrect because animals like mice do not have large eyes. Nonetheless, they are nocturnal. They are still able to find food in the dark using their sense of smell. **(C)** is incorrect because small eyes do not absorb as much light, making it harder to see at night. Therefore an animal with small eyes probably does not see well at night. If an animal has small eyes, this does not necessarily mean that it is likely to be eaten by an owl. After all, many animals that have small eyes (like fish, birds, etc.) are not likely to be eaten by an owl. Therefore choice **(D)** is incorrect.

3) **B**

In paragraph 2 we learn that "Owls have very large eyes." This helps them "find food in the dark." This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 3 we learn that "Owls also have very good hearing." This helps them "catch their prey even when it is very dark." This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 4 we learn that "Like owls, mice are also nocturnal animals. Mice have an excellent sense of smell." This helps them "find food in the dark." However, the question asks about owls, not mice. The passage does not provide information to support the idea that owls can find food in the dark using their sense of smell. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

4) **C**

prey (*noun*): an animal that is hunted by other animals.

To answer this question correctly, it helps to use context. In paragraph 2, the author writes that the owl's large eyes helps it "find food in the dark." In paragraph 3, the author gives more information about how owls find food in the dark. The author says that an owl's sense of hearing helps it to hear "small animals" moving around in the night. This hearing "helps owls catch their prey even when it is very dark." Owls have to find food in the dark. This food is the "small animals" moving beneath them. Owls use their eyesight and hearing to catch their *prey*, which is another word for an animal that is hunted by other animals. Choice **(C)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choice **(A)**. Therefore, it is incorrect. Although the passage does say that the owl hunts "small animals," this does not necessarily mean that only small animals are prey. Small animals are the prey of owls, but not necessarily of other animals. The prey of a lion, for example, could be a large animal, such as an elephant. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. **(D)** is incorrect because this defines a predator, which is the opposite of prey.

5) **B**

In the final paragraph, the author writes: "Being nocturnal helps mice to hide from the many different animals that want to eat them." In other words, sleeping during the day helps mice to keep themselves safe. This means choice **(B)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

6) **A**

In the final paragraph, the author writes: "Being nocturnal helps mice to hide from the many different animals that want to eat them. Most of the birds, snakes, and lizards that like to eat mice sleep at night—except, of course, owls!" Because mice are nocturnal, they can hide from most animals that sleep at night. Owls, however, do not sleep at night. For this reason, it is likely that owls hunt mice. This means **(A)** is correct. **(B)** is incorrect because mice cannot hide from owls because, like mice, owls are awake during the night. The owls can use their excellent senses of sight and sound to find the mice. Although the author says that mice hide from birds, snakes, and lizards, this does not necessarily mean an owl needs to hide from these animals as well. After all, an owl is not likely to be eaten by a snake or a lizard. This means **(C)** is incorrect. The passage does not provide information to support choice **(D)**. Therefore it is incorrect.

7) **D**

A good conclusion restates the main ideas or points of the passage. In paragraph 1, the author introduces the fact that some animals are nocturnal. In paragraphs 2 and 3, the author describes how the owl is nocturnal, and uses its senses to find food at night. In paragraphs 4 and 5, the author describes another nocturnal animal, the mouse, and how it uses its senses to find food at night. Using this information, it can be understood that **(D)** provides the best conclusion because it accurately restates the main ideas or points of the passage. Although the passage discusses owls, it also talks about mice. The conclusion in **(A)** fails to mention this, and is therefore incorrect. Although the passage discusses mice, this is not the main idea. Rather, this is used as an example of another animal (in addition to the owl) that is nocturnal, and how that animal uses its sense to find food in the dark. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. While the passage does say that both mice and owls are nocturnal, it does not conclude that this makes them especially vulnerable to attack from diurnal animals. In fact, the final paragraph contains information that states the opposite: "Being nocturnal helps mice to hide from the many different animals that want to eat them." This means **(C)** is incorrect.