Safety in Numbers

Read how animal groups help their members survive.

3.11 "Construct explanations of how forming groups helps some organisms survive."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each group action, then circle the words that tell how that action helps the animals survive.

Surviving Together

1. On a windy day in Antarctica, emperor penguins stand close together in a huddle. The birds on the outside block some of the cold wind. Penguins near the middle lose less body heat than they would alone. The group slowly shifts, so birds from the edge can move toward the warmer middle. By taking turns in different spots, more penguins can stay warm.

2. In the ocean, sardines swim in a school, a group of fish moving close together. When a larger fish hunts, the sardines can turn at nearly the same time. Their quick turns make the school change shape. With so many fish moving close together, the hunter may have trouble picking just one sardine to catch. Staying in the school can lower a sardine's chance of being eaten.

3. On dry land, meerkats search for insects to eat. Some members of the group take turns watching for danger while others look for food. A meerkat that spots a hawk may give an alarm call. The call warns the others, so they can run into a burrow before the hawk reaches them. Taking turns watching helps more meerkats find food without leaving the group unwarned.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does moving from the edge toward the middle help an emperor penguin survive on a windy day?

2. Why might a larger fish have trouble choosing one sardine to catch when it hunts a school?

3. How does taking turns watching help meerkats get food more safely?

4. How can an alarm call help other meerkats survive a hawk's attack?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A visitor says, “All animal groups stay safe in the same way.” Write three sentences explaining why that is not true. Use sardines and meerkats as examples, and tell how each group's action helps it survive.

ANSWER KEY

Safety in Numbers

GRADE 3 · 3.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each group action, then circle the words that tell how that action helps the animals survive. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does moving from the edge toward the middle help an emperor penguin survive on a windy day?	**The middle is warmer, so the penguin loses less body heat.**
2	Why might a larger fish have trouble choosing one sardine to catch when it hunts a school?	**Many sardines move close together and turn at nearly the same time, making it hard to pick one.**
3	How does taking turns watching help meerkats get food more safely?	**Some meerkats can look for food while others watch for danger.**
4	How can an alarm call help other meerkats survive a hawk's attack?	**The call warns them in time to run into a burrow.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sardines swim close together, which makes it hard for a hunter to choose one fish. Meerkats take turns watching and call when they see danger, giving the others time to reach a burrow. Both groups help their members survive, but one makes a fish hard to catch while the other warns its members to hide.

Accept explanations that connect each group action to its survival benefit. For the open task, students should describe a clear difference between how sardines and meerkats use groups.