Raccoon Word Detectives

Use context clues and word parts to unlock precise meanings.

5.L.V.2 "Word Analysis: Acquire and apply word analysis skills to determine the meanings of words and to communicate with precision in a variety of settings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each word or phrase whose meaning you can figure out from nearby clues. Circle any word made from smaller meaningful parts, and number the clue words that helped you.

Nighttime Neighborhood Visitor

1. At dusk, a raccoon slipped from a hollow tree near the river. The nocturnal animal was beginning its active time, while most people were heading home. It used its nimble front paws to turn over stones and feel along the muddy bank. A crayfish darted away, but the raccoon quickly found fallen berries nearby after its search.

2. Raccoons are adaptable, which means they can adjust when their surroundings change. In cities, they may search parks, gardens, and trash bins for food. This behavior can create conflict with people, especially when food is left outside. Wildlife experts suggest securing garbage lids and removing pet dishes at night. These steps make yards less attractive to hungry visitors.

3. Although raccoons sometimes raid containers, they are not trying to cause trouble. They are opportunistic feeders, animals that eat foods that are easy to find. Their varied diet may include insects, eggs, fruit, and leftovers. Learning why an animal behaves this way helps communities choose practical solutions instead of harmful ones. Simple changes can protect both wildlife and neighborhoods.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does nocturnal mean in paragraph 1? Name the context clue that helped you.

2. What does adaptable mean in paragraph 2? Which nearby words prove your answer?

3. How does the phrase “animals that eat foods that are easy to find” help you understand opportunistic feeders?

4. The word wildlife is a compound word. What two words form it, and what does wildlife mean in this passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about an animal that might live near you. Use one compound word and one word ending in -able, and underline both words. Make the meaning of each word clear from your sentences.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.L.V.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each word or phrase whose meaning you can figure out from nearby clues. Circle any word made from smaller meaningful parts, and number the clue words that helped you. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does nocturnal mean in paragraph 1? Name the context clue that helped you.	**Nocturnal means active at night. The clues are that it was dusk, the raccoon was beginning its active time, and people were heading home.**
2	What does adaptable mean in paragraph 2? Which nearby words prove your answer?	**Adaptable means able to adjust to changes. The passage says raccoons can adjust when their surroundings change.**
3	How does the phrase "animals that eat foods that are easy to find" help you understand opportunistic feeders?	**It explains that opportunistic feeders eat whatever food is easy to find.**
4	The word wildlife is a compound word. What two words form it, and what does wildlife mean in this passage?	**Wildlife is formed from wild and life. It means animals living in nature, such as raccoons.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The squirrel climbed the backyard fence to reach a bird feeder. It is adaptable because it can find food in trees, gardens, or parks.

Accept reasonable synonyms when students use passage clues or word parts to explain meanings. For Part 3, accept any accurate two-sentence response with an underlined compound word, an underlined word ending in -able, and clear context for both.