Otter Word Detectives

Use context clues to build precise animal vocabulary.

3.RV.1.F "Develop breadth of vocabulary knowledge by listening to and reading high quality, complex text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle four words or phrases that give precise information about sea otters. Draw a line from each circled word or phrase to nearby words that help explain it.

Sea Otters at Work

1. Along the Pacific coast, sea otters float among tall kelp plants. Kelp is a kind of large brown algae that grows in cool ocean water. An otter may wrap a strand of kelp around its body before resting. This natural anchor keeps the animal from drifting away while waves move the water below its paws.

2. Sea otters have extremely dense fur, with far more hairs in a small patch than many other mammals. The fur traps air next to the otter's skin. That air helps the otter stay warm in chilly water. Because otters do not have a thick layer of blubber, clean fur is especially important for their survival.

3. To care for its fur, an otter grooms itself again and again. It rubs, rolls, and blows air through the fur. These actions keep the hairs fluffy and able to hold air. Otters also use stones to crack open hard-shelled prey, such as clams or sea urchins, while floating on their backs near the surface.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does anchor mean in the first paragraph?

2. What does dense mean when the passage describes the otter's fur?

3. What does the second paragraph help you understand about blubber?

4. What does grooms mean in the third paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an animal you know. Write two sentences about one of its body parts or actions, using one precise word and a context clue that helps explain the word.

ANSWER KEY

Otter Word Detectives

GRADE 3 · 3.RV.1.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle four words or phrases that give precise information about sea otters. Draw a line from each circled word or phrase to nearby words that help explain it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does anchor mean in the first paragraph?	**Something that holds the otter in place so it does not drift away.**
2	What does dense mean when the passage describes the otter's fur?	**Packed closely together, with many hairs in a small area.**
3	What does the second paragraph help you understand about blubber?	**It is a thick layer that helps an animal stay warm.**
4	What does grooms mean in the third paragraph?	**Cares for its fur by rubbing, rolling, and blowing air through it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A beaver has webbed feet, meaning skin stretches between its toes. Its broad tail helps it steer while it swims.

Accept any four precise words or phrases circled if each has a reasonable nearby context clue. For the writing task, accept two sentences about an animal that use a precise word and include a clue to its meaning.