

Vampire Bats Reading Comprehension

Name _____

Vampire bats are a special member of both the mammal and bat family. They are commonly found in forests in Mexico and Central and South America. These bats are known for their unorthodox feeding habits, as they feed on the blood of animals like cows, horses, birds, and pigs for survival. This eating method of consuming blood as food is called hematophagy, and the bats' saliva contains a substance called Draculin that prevents this blood from clotting in their bodies.

Vampire bats differ from the common bat with a series of unique physical adaptations that allow them to thrive. In addition to flying, vampire bats are capable of walking, running, and jumping. They have heat sensors on their noses to locate the optimal feeding spot on another body, sharp front teeth to puncture skin, and strong hind legs and thumbs that allow for a quick take-off after completion of feeding. These adaptations are not only advantageous, they are critical: if vampire bats cannot find blood for two days in a row, they can die.

Contrary to the image conjured by the idea of a vampire bat, these bats are hardly dangerous. They don't hurt the animal they feed on at all, and they can often drink the blood of a sleeping animal for thirty minutes without even waking it up. Furthermore, they do not feed off of humans. Vampire bats are actually non-aggressive animals and prefer to group in large colonies of up to a thousand bats rather than fighting amongst each other for territory. Vampire bat mothers care for their babies with tenderness, and will even take orphan bats under their wings. Finally, unlike any other bat species, vampire bats can even share food with each other. One bat can throw up blood it has already consumed to allow a fellow bat to feed.

1. Which of the following is the most logical Greek etymology for the word "hematophagy," keeping in mind its definition?
 - a. *hemi* meaning "half" and *phainein* meaning "to show"
 - b. *haima* meaning "blood" and *phagein* meaning "to show"
 - c. *haima* meaning "blood" and *phagein* meaning "to eat"
 - d. *hemi* meaning "half" and *phagein* meaning "to eat"
2. Which of the following is NOT an adaptation of the vampire bat?
 - a. Heat sensors on their noses
 - b. More durable wings
 - c. Strong thumbs
 - d. Sharp front teeth

3. What common misconception about vampire bats does the article attempt to disprove?

- a. Vampire bats are endangered species.
- b. Vampire bats are harmful blood-drinkers and scary creatures.
- c. Vampire bats never feed on humans.
- d. Vampire bats are extremely evolutionarily advanced.

4. Which of the following might happen without draculin?

- a. Blood clots would increase, depriving the bats' brains of oxygen.
- b. The bats would not be able to digest the blood that they drink.
- c. The bats would drool excessively while drinking blood.
- d. Blood clots would decrease, depriving the bats' brains of oxygen.

5. Which of the following describes the nature of the relationship within communities of vampire bats?

- a. Individual over community
- b. Nature over nurture
- c. Reproduction over parenting
- d. Cooperation over competition

6. In what way do vampire bats differ from vampires?

- a. Vampire bats do not have sharp teeth for biting.
- b. Vampire bats enjoy garlic.
- c. Vampire bats do not feed on humans.
- d. Vampire bats do not drink blood.

7. In which location would you not expect to find a vampire bat?

- a. Forests
- b. South America
- c. Yucatan Rainforest, Mexico
- d. Hawaii, USA