

LESSON 1

Read this article about zebras. Then answer questions about the article.
Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 through 12.

species of zebras where they live

Zebras are members of the horse family. They live in herds in the grasslands and deserts of Africa. There are three species of zebra. They are the common zebra, Grevy's zebra, and the mountain zebra.



stripe patterns

When zebras are born, they are brown and white. As they grow, they develop a distinctive stripe pattern. A zebra's stripes are like fingerprints. No two sets of zebra stripes are exactly alike. All zebras have alternating white and black or dark brown stripes.

A zebra's stripes might be wide or thin. Some stripes swirl together near the back of the legs.

purpose of stripes

It is believed that a zebra's stripes help to keep herds of the animals together. Members of the same herd know who belongs and who does not by their stripe patterns. Zebras with abnormal stripe patterns are usually not allowed in the herd. They seldom survive on their own. *not the usual or normal*

what they eat / predators

Zebras feed on grass. They also eat bark, leaves, buds, fruits, and roots. A zebra spends most of its time eating. The stripes protect the zebra while it feeds. They help the zebra blend into the tall grass, making it hard for predators to find them. When a herd of zebras huddles together, a predator has a difficult time trying to single out one zebra among the mass of moving stripes. It can't tell where one zebra begins and another ends.

predators / protection

The main enemies of zebras include lions, hyenas, leopards, and cheetahs. Zebras protect themselves from predators by keeping together in the herd. When a herd of zebras is sleeping, one zebra is always on the alert for danger. A zebra's large ears rotate to locate sounds. Its night vision is as keen as an owl's. If threatened, zebras will try to run away. They can run at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. Zebras may live up to 22 years in the wild. Those that live this long usually die of old age.

future of the zebra

Today, zebras face an uncertain future in the wild. Many are hunted by humans for their meat and their hide. The hunting of zebras must be stopped. Otherwise, their numbers will decrease. Zebras are also at risk because food and water supplies are shrinking. They must fight with farmers for grazing land and water, which is scarce. One species of zebra has already died out. The quagga lived in South Africa and died out during the 1860s after being hunted to extinction. The name quagga comes from the sound of the animal's call, a mix between a dog's barking and a horse's neighing. Unlike other types of zebras, the quagga was brown, with a white tail and white legs. It had stripes only on its head, neck, and front of its body.

type of zebra