Name: _____ Date: _____

The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Circle group

A sloth spends most of its life hanging in a rainforest tree. It moves so slowly that plants grow on it. Tiny plants called algae live in its fur.

A sloth's hairs have small grooves. The grooves hold water. Algae like damp places, so they grow in the hairs. Soon the sloth's brown coat looks green.

The green color helps. When the sloth hangs still in the leaves, it looks like part of the tree. An eagle or a big cat has a hard time seeing it.

Sloths eat leaves, and leaves are not very nourishing. Some scientists think a sloth may nibble its fur and get a little extra food from the algae.

Moths and beetles live in sloth fur too. One sloth is like a very slow neighborhood.

Questions

1. What lives in a sloth's fur and makes it green?

_____

_____

2. Why do algae grow well in the fur?

_____

_____

3. How does the green color help the sloth?

_____

_____

4. What do sloths eat?

_____

_____

5. What other creatures live in sloth fur?

_____

_____

6. Why is one sloth like a neighborhood?

_____

_____

Words to know

algae: very small plant-like living things that grow in damp places
nourishing: full of what a body needs to grow and stay healthy
rainforest: a thick, wet forest with tall trees and heavy rain

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Triangle group

A sloth spends almost its whole life hanging in a rainforest tree. It moves so slowly that something surprising grows on it. Tiny plants called algae live in its fur.

The fur of a sloth is built in a special way. Its hairs have small grooves that catch water and hold it. Algae love damp places, so they settle into the hairs and grow. After a while, the sloth's brown coat takes on a green tint.

The green color helps the sloth. When it hangs still among the leaves, it looks like part of the tree. A hungry eagle or big cat has a hard time spotting it.

The algae may help in another way. Sloths eat leaves, which are not very nourishing. Some scientists think a sloth may sometimes lick or nibble its fur and gain a little extra food from the algae.

Other tiny creatures move in as well. Special moths and beetles live in sloth fur. This means one sloth can be a walking, very slow neighborhood.

Every sloth is its own small garden, and the whole thing travels at a snail's pace.

Questions

1. What lives in a sloth's fur and makes it look green?

_____

_____

2. Why do algae grow so well in sloth fur?

_____

_____

3. How does the green color help the sloth?

_____

_____

4. What do sloths eat?

_____

_____

5. Which other creatures live in sloth fur?

_____

_____

6. Why does the writer call a sloth a walking neighborhood?

_____

_____

Words to know

algae: very small plant-like living things that grow in damp places
tint: a light touch of color
nourishing: full of what a body needs to grow and stay healthy
rainforest: a thick, wet forest with tall trees and heavy rain

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Square group

A sloth spends nearly its entire life suspended in the branches of a rainforest tree, and it moves so slowly that something astonishing grows on it. Tiny plant-like organisms called algae make their home in its fur.

The fur of a sloth is constructed in an unusual way. Each hair has small grooves that trap and hold water, and since algae flourish in damp places, they settle into the hairs and multiply. Gradually, the sloth's brown coat takes on a greenish tint.

This color is a real advantage. When the sloth hangs motionless among the leaves, it blends in so well with the tree that a hungry eagle or big cat can scarcely spot it.

The algae may be useful in another way. Sloths eat leaves, which are not especially nourishing, and some scientists believe a sloth may sometimes nibble its fur and gain a little extra food from the algae.

Other tiny creatures move in as well. Special moths and beetles live in sloth fur, so a single sloth can be a slow-moving neighborhood of its own.

Questions

1. What lives in a sloth's fur and gives it a green tint?

_____

_____

2. Why do algae flourish in sloth fur?

_____

_____

3. How does the green color benefit the sloth?

_____

_____

4. What do sloths eat?

_____

_____

5. Which other creatures live in sloth fur?

_____

_____

6. Why is a single sloth described as a neighborhood?

_____

_____

Words to know

algae: very small plant-like living things that grow in damp places
tint: a light touch of color
nourishing: full of what a body needs to grow and stay healthy
rainforest: a thick, wet forest with tall trees and heavy rain

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Easier · 130 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.9

1. Tiny plants called algae.
2. The hairs have grooves that hold water, and algae like damp places.
3. The sloth looks like part of the tree, so predators have a hard time seeing it.
4. Leaves.
5. Moths and beetles.
6. Many small living things live on one sloth.

Triangle: The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

This passage · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.9

1. Tiny plants called algae.
2. The hairs have small grooves that catch and hold water, and algae love damp places.
3. It helps the sloth look like part of the tree, so predators have a hard time seeing it.
4. Leaves.
5. Special moths and beetles.
6. Many small living things, such as algae, moths and beetles, live on one sloth.

Square: The Sloth's Green Fur Garden

Harder · 180 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.4

1. Tiny plant-like organisms called algae.
2. Each hair has grooves that trap water, and algae flourish in damp places.
3. It blends the sloth in with the tree so predators can scarcely spot it.
4. Leaves.
5. Special moths and beetles.
6. Many small living things, such as algae, moths and beetles, live on one sloth.