Name: _____ Date: _____

The Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

Circle group

High on rocky mountain slopes, the winters are long and the snow is deep. A small furry animal lives there. It looks like a hamster with round ears. It is called a pika, and it is a cousin of rabbits. Many mountain animals hibernate, but the pika does not. It stays awake all winter. That means it needs food every day.

Plants are buried under snow for months. So the pika gets ready in the short summer. It runs back and forth between the meadow and its home in the rocks. It carries mouthfuls of grass, flowers and leaves. Then it lays them out to dry in the sun, like a farmer drying hay. When the plants are dry, the pika tucks them into a pile under a rock. This hidden store is called a haypile.

A pika can make dozens of trips in one day. A big haypile may take the whole summer to finish. In winter, the pika eats from its store. It moves through tunnels under the snow to reach it. Pikas often pick plants that stay fresh a long time. That makes the haypile a good meal.

Pikas also keep watch. A sharp whistle warns the others when a hawk or a weasel is near. Pikas are built for cold places, so a very warm day can be hard on them. Many scientists study pikas to learn how mountain homes are changing.

Questions

1. What animal is a pika related to?

_____

_____

2. Why does a pika need food every day in winter?

_____

_____

3. What is a haypile?

_____

_____

4. What tells other pikas that a hawk or a weasel is near?

_____

_____

5. Why does the pika dry its plants first?

_____

_____

6. Why might scientists study pikas to learn about mountains?

_____

_____

Words to know

hibernate: to sleep through the winter to save energy
meadow: an open field of grass and wildflowers
haypile: a store of dried plants a pika saves for winter

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 Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

Triangle group

High on rocky mountain slopes, where winters are long and the snow lies deep, lives a small furry animal that looks like a round-eared hamster. It is called a pika, and it is a relative of rabbits. Unlike many mountain animals, the pika does not hibernate. It stays awake all winter, which means it needs food every single day.

Plants are buried under snow for months, so the pika solves the problem during the short summer. It runs back and forth between the meadow and its home among the rocks, carrying mouthfuls of grasses, flowers and leaves. Then it spreads them out to dry in the sun, just as a farmer dries hay. When the plants are ready, the pika tucks them into a pile beneath a sheltering rock. This hidden store is called a haypile.

A pika can make dozens of trips in a single day, and a large haypile may take the whole season to finish. When winter comes, the animal lives off its stored food, moving through tunnels under the snow to reach it. Pikas often choose plants that stay fresh for a long time, which makes the haypile a healthy meal.

Pikas also keep watch. A sharp whistle warns neighbors when a hawk or a weasel is near. Because these animals are built for cold places, a very warm day can be hard on them, so many scientists study pikas to learn how mountain habitats are changing.

Questions

1. What kind of animal is a pika related to?

_____

_____

2. Why does a pika need food every day in winter?

_____

_____

3. What is a haypile?

_____

_____

4. What warns other pikas that a hawk or a weasel is near?

_____

_____

5. Why does the pika dry its plants before storing them?

_____

_____

6. Why might scientists study pikas to learn about mountain habitats?

_____

_____

Words to know

hibernate: to sleep through the winter to save energy
meadow: an open field of grass and wildflowers
haypile: a store of dried plants a pika saves for winter
sheltering: giving cover and protection from weather or danger
habitats: the places where animals naturally live

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 Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

Square group

High on rocky mountain slopes, where the winters are long and the snow lies deep, lives a small furry animal that resembles a round-eared hamster. It is called a pika, and it is a relative of the rabbit. Unlike many mountain animals, the pika does not hibernate. It remains active throughout the winter, which means that it requires food every single day.

Because the plants are buried under snow for months, the pika solves the problem during the brief summer. It scurries back and forth between the meadow and its home among the rocks, carrying mouthfuls of grasses, flowers and leaves. It then spreads them out to dry in the sun, much as a farmer dries hay. Once the plants are ready, the pika tucks them into a pile beneath a sheltering rock, and this hidden store is known as a haypile.

A pika may make dozens of trips in a single day, and a large haypile can take the entire season to complete. When winter arrives, the animal lives off its stored food, traveling through tunnels beneath the snow to reach it. Pikas often select plants that stay fresh for a long time, which makes the haypile a nourishing meal.

Pikas also stand guard. A sharp whistle warns their neighbors when a hawk or a weasel is nearby. Because these animals are built for cold places, a very warm day can be difficult for them, which is why many scientists study pikas to understand how mountain habitats are changing.

Questions

1. Which animal is the pika related to?

_____

_____

2. Why does a pika require food every day in winter?

_____

_____

3. What is a haypile?

_____

_____

4. What warns other pikas that a hawk or a weasel is nearby?

_____

_____

5. Why does the pika dry its plants before storing them?

_____

_____

6. Why might scientists study pikas to understand mountain habitats?

_____

_____

Words to know

hibernate: to sleep through the winter to save energy
meadow: an open field of grass and wildflowers
haypile: a store of dried plants a pika saves for winter
sheltering: giving cover and protection from weather or danger
habitats: the places where animals naturally live

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 Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

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

Circle: The Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

Easier · 236 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.5

1. Rabbits.
2. It does not hibernate, so it stays awake all winter.
3. A hidden pile of dried plants kept under a rock.
4. A sharp whistle.
5. Dry plants last longer and do not spoil, so they can be eaten in winter.
6. Pikas are built for the cold, so trouble on warm days shows that the mountain is changing.

Triangle: The Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

This passage · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.7

1. Rabbits.
2. It does not hibernate, so it stays awake all winter.
3. A hidden pile of dried plants stored under a rock.
4. A sharp whistle.
5. Dry plants last longer and do not spoil, so they can be eaten in winter.
6. Pikas are built for the cold, so warm days that bother them show that the habitat is changing.

Square: The Pika Who Makes Hay While the Sun Shines

Harder · 251 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8

1. The rabbit.
2. It does not hibernate, so it remains active all winter.
3. A hidden pile of dried plants stored beneath a rock.
4. A sharp whistle.
5. Dried plants last longer without spoiling, so they can be eaten during winter.
6. Pikas are built for the cold, so their difficulty on warm days reveals that the habitat is changing.