Name: _____ Date: _____

The Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

Circle group

Deep in a rainforest, the leaves hung so thick that noon looked like evening. A young okapi named Nyala did not like her legs. Her body was smooth and dark brown, and she liked that. But her legs had bold white stripes, as if someone had painted them last. The other animals had plain coats. Nyala wished she could blend in.

"Why am I marked like this?" she asked her mother one morning.

"Walk behind me and you will see," her mother said.

Nyala grumbled, but she followed her mother down the narrow trail. When the forest grew dim, the pale stripes on her mother's back legs flickered ahead like small lanterns. Nyala kept her eyes on them and did not get lost.

A few weeks later, a heavy rain sent the herd to higher ground. Nyala lost her mother among the tangled trunks. Mist drifted through the trees. She called out, but the loud rain covered her voice. She stood and shook. She was sure she was lost.

Then she saw a flicker of white between two ferns, and then another. Her mother was walking slowly through the gloom, hoping her stripes would be seen. Nyala bounded toward them, and they were together again.

That evening, Nyala looked at her legs in a new way. They were not an embarrassment. They were a signal that a calf could follow. She thought they might help another lost calf one day.

Questions

1. Why did Nyala dislike her legs?

_____

_____

2. What did the stripes look like in the dim forest?

_____

_____

3. What sent the herd to higher ground?

_____

_____

4. How did Nyala find her mother again?

_____

_____

5. Why did Nyala's mother tell her to walk behind her?

_____

_____

6. How did Nyala's feelings about her legs change?

_____

_____

Words to know

rainforest: a thick, wet forest where tall trees block the sun

gloom: a dim, dark, shadowy place

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 Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

Triangle group

Deep in a rainforest where the leaves hung so thickly that noon looked like evening, a young okapi named Nyala was unhappy with her legs. Her body was a smooth, dark brown, which she liked, but her legs were banded in bold white stripes, as if some careless painter had added them as an afterthought, and every other forest animal wore a plain coat. Nyala wished desperately that she could blend in with them.

One morning she asked her mother why she was marked in such an unusual way, and her mother replied only that Nyala should walk behind her and find out. Nyala grumbled, but she followed her mother along the narrow trail. Whenever the forest grew dim, the pale stripes on her mother's hind legs flickered ahead of her like small lanterns, and Nyala kept her eyes on them and never lost her way.

A few weeks later, a heavy rain drove the herd toward higher ground, and Nyala was separated from her mother among the tangled trunks. Mist drifted between the trees, and the drumming rain swallowed her voice whenever she called out. She stood trembling, certain that she was lost.

Then she noticed a flicker of white between two ferns, followed by another. Her mother was moving carefully through the gloom, hoping that her stripes would be seen, and Nyala bounded toward them until the two were together again.

That evening, Nyala examined her own legs with new respect. She could not call them an embarrassment any longer, because they were a signal that a calf could follow, and she realized that the very feature she had been ashamed of might guide another lost calf someday.

Questions

1. Why was Nyala unhappy with her legs?

_____

_____

2. What did the stripes look like in the dim forest?

_____

_____

3. What drove the herd toward higher ground?

_____

_____

4. How did Nyala find her mother again?

_____

_____

5. Why did Nyala's mother tell her to walk behind her?

_____

_____

6. How did Nyala's feelings about her legs change?

_____

_____

Words to know

rainforest: a thick, wet forest where tall trees block the sun
banded: marked with wide stripes of color
afterthought: something added last without much planning
separated: pulled apart from someone you were with
gloom: a dim, dark, shadowy place

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 Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

Square group

Deep in an ancient rainforest where the leaves hung so thickly overhead that noon resembled evening, a young okapi named Nyala was thoroughly unhappy with her legs. Her body was a smooth, dark brown, which she rather admired, but her legs were banded in bold white stripes, as if some careless painter had added them as an afterthought, and every other creature in the forest wore a perfectly plain coat. Nyala wished desperately that she could somehow blend in with all of them.

One morning she asked her mother why she had been marked in such an unusual fashion, and her mother replied gently that Nyala should walk behind her and discover the reason for herself. Nyala grumbled about the suggestion, but she followed her mother along the narrow trail, and whenever the forest grew dim, the pale stripes on her mother's hind legs flickered ahead of her like small lanterns, so that Nyala kept her eyes fixed upon them and never once lost her way.

A few weeks later, a heavy rain drove the entire herd toward higher ground, and Nyala was separated from her mother somewhere among the tangled trunks. Mist drifted between the trees, and the drumming rain swallowed her voice completely whenever she called out. She stood trembling, convinced that she was lost for good.

Then she noticed a flicker of white between two ferns, followed almost immediately by another. Her mother was moving carefully through the gloom, hoping desperately that her stripes would be seen, and Nyala bounded toward them until the two were together again.

That evening, Nyala examined her own legs with newfound respect. She could no longer describe them as an embarrassment, because they were a signal that a frightened calf could follow, and she realized that the very feature she had been ashamed of might someday guide another lost calf safely home.

Questions

1. Why was Nyala unhappy with her legs?

_____

_____

2. What did the stripes look like in the dim forest?

_____

_____

3. What drove the herd toward higher ground?

_____

_____

4. How did Nyala find her mother again?

_____

_____

5. Why did Nyala's mother tell her to walk behind her?

_____

_____

6. How did Nyala's feelings about her legs change?

_____

_____

Words to know

rainforest: a thick, wet forest where tall trees block the sun
banded: marked with wide stripes of color
afterthought: something added last without much planning
separated: pulled apart from someone you were with
gloom: a dim, dark, shadowy place

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 Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

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

Circle: The Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

Easier · 240 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.2

1. They had bold white stripes, and other animals had plain coats.
2. They flickered like small lanterns.
3. A heavy rain.
4. She saw flickers of white stripes between the ferns and ran to them.
5. She wanted Nyala to see that the stripes help a calf follow in the dim forest.
6. She stopped feeling embarrassed and saw them as a helpful signal.

Triangle: The Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

This passage · 280 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.3

1. They were banded in bold white stripes, while other animals wore plain coats.
2. They flickered like small lanterns.
3. A heavy rain.
4. She saw flickers of white stripes between the ferns and ran toward them.
5. She wanted Nyala to learn that the stripes help a calf follow in the dim forest.
6. She stopped being embarrassed and saw them as a helpful signal.

Square: The Okapi Calf and the Striped Legs

Harder · 311 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 12.2

1. They were banded in bold white stripes, while other animals wore plain coats.
2. They flickered like small lanterns.
3. A heavy rain.
4. She saw flickers of white stripes between the ferns and ran toward them.
5. She wanted Nyala to learn that the stripes help a calf follow in the dim forest.
6. She stopped being embarrassed and came to see them as a helpful signal.