

Name: _____

A Reptile of Many Talents

by Kelly Hashway

What animal has feet like a parrot, can see in more than one direction at a time, and has a tongue that can move with incredible speed? It's not a bird. It's not a frog. It's a chameleon.

If you've ever looked closely at a chameleon's toes, you'll see they have parrot-like feet. Each foot has five toes grouped as two together on the outside and three together on the inside. The toes are fused this way to help the chameleon grip branches. These toes also have sharp claws, making



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the same target, they are able to see tiny insects from long distances, which is very helpful when hunting for food.

They have extremely long tongues, sometimes even longer than their body length. These tongues can extend so quickly the human eye can't follow it. The chameleon's tongue can snatch up its prey in about thirty thousandths of a second. How does the tongue move so quickly? Well, the tongue operates a lot like a bow and arrow. The tongue catapults out of the mouth, giving it the speed it needs to reach the prey before it gets away.

One of the chameleon's most interesting talents is the ability to change the color of its skin. Between the different species of chameleons, they can turn all the colors of the rainbow,



plus purple, pink, black, brown, and even turquoise. Chameleons can use this color change as camouflage to blend into their surroundings, but the most common reason to change colors is to regulate their body temperature and even show their emotions. They use color changes to show dominance and defend their territory. They even use their colors to attract mates.

Most chameleons are found in Africa, but a few species have been found in other places around the world, including Asia and the United States. They inhabit tropical rain forests and even deserts. Since chameleons do not have ears, they sense vibrations through solid surfaces in their environment, such as tree branches.



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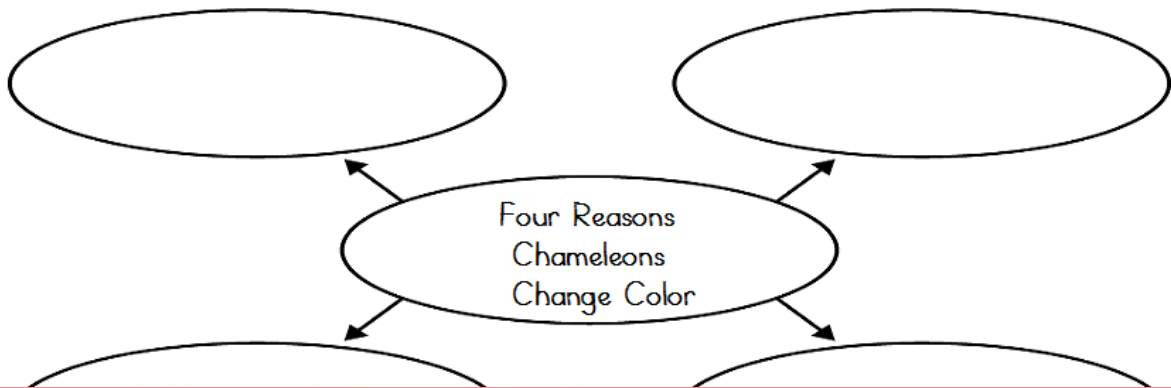
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1. Which continent does not have wild chameleons?
 - a. North America
 - b. South America
 - c. Asia
 - d. Africa
2. How quickly does a chameleon's tongue snatch prey?
 - a. thirty thousand seconds
 - b. thirty thousandths of one second
 - c. 0.3 seconds
 - d. 30.100 seconds

3. Complete the graphic organizer.



4



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_____ They inhabit tropical rain forests and even deserts.

_____ All of these special features make the chameleon an interesting member of the reptile family.

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A Reptile of Many Talents

Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.



1. ___ u s ___ d

hint: connected

2. ___ u ___ i ___

hint: tiny opening in the eye



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5. ___ ___ o ___ ___ o ___ s

hint: feelings; moods

6. ___ u ___ ___ ___ i s ___

hint: greenish-blue color

7. ___ ___ ___ e r ___

hint: land area that does not receive much rain

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In the article, "A Reptile of Many Talents", you learned many facts about chameleons.



Write two paragraphs. In the first paragraph, explain how chameleons are like other reptiles. In the second paragraph, tell how they are unique from other reptiles.



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ANSWER KEY

A Reptile of Many Talents

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1. Which continent does not have wild chameleons? **b**
a. North America b. **South America**



2.

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3.

4.



- F** The toes are fused this way to help the chameleon grip branches.
- F** They inhabit tropical rain forests and even deserts.
- O** All of these special features make the chameleon an interesting member of the reptile family.

ANSWER KEY

A Reptile of Many Talents

Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.



1. f u s e d

fused

2.

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3.

4.

5.

6.

7.



hint: land area that does not receive much rain