



5

# Stay Home Reader

Stories for Fun and Skills



VIVA EDUCATION



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**Stories for Fun and Skills**



**VIVA EDUCATION**

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## HOW THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU

Staying home and practising social distancing are simple yet decisive ways in which we all contribute to the epic battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. School closure is indeed the heavy price students and teachers have to pay as a result. However, this is no reason for learning to stop. As a committed provider of educational content, Viva Education has taken extraordinary steps to make learning accessible to every student via online means. We have released the vast range of online learning material on VivaDigital.in to learners and educators for unrestricted use.

Continuing this effort, we are proud to present our *Stay Home Readers* for classes 1 to 8, which have been specially compiled for home learning and remote teaching. Engagement is the key to better home learning, and this series adopts the route of stories to effective language-skill building. The content is enjoyable, stimulating and requires hardly any teacher supervision. We wish you safety and good health as you enjoy learning with these readers.

# 1

## Lucky and the Giants



Once there was a man called Lucky. He was a very timid man, but he liked to pretend to himself that he was the bravest man in the world. He was always boasting of the great deeds he could perform but, as you might guess, he never did anything really brave. When no one was about, he would pretend he was fighting wild beasts and giants, and of course, he imagined he killed them every time.

One day, while crossing a field, he swung his sword wildly about him, and was soon engaged in a desperate battle with three imaginary giants. But all he managed to do was kill three flies.

“Well, they might have been giants,” said Lucky to himself, “and if they had been, I would surely have slain them.” When he arrived home, he proudly engraved these words on his sword, “This is the Sword of Lucky, Slayer of Giants.”

Next day he took his sword, tied a small bag of flour on his back, and set off on a long journey. After walking for many miles he grew very tired and began to search for a good place to rest. He discovered a fine spot under a large tree, but before lying down, he buried his little bag of flour in the ground, in case thieves tried to rob him while he slept. Soon after, he was in the land of dreams.

At dawn next morning, while he was still fast asleep, seven real giants chanced to pass that way. They saw the sleeping Lucky and read the writing on the sword which was by his side.

“Oh!” said one of the seven. “Here indeed is a mighty warrior. We must ask him to show us what great deeds he can perform.”

The loud voice of the giant awakened Lucky, and he was terrified at the sight of the seven huge men. He did not let them see how frightened he was, and when he noticed they were friendly, he spoke quite boldly to them:

“Well! What do you wish?”

“We should like to see you perform some great deed,” replied one of the giants.

“That you shall see this very minute,” replied Lucky. “See! This is the kind of man I am. When I stamp my foot, the earth shakes.”

He walked over to the spot where he had hidden his little bag of flour under the soil. He stamped and stamped on the



flour until the giants were almost hidden in clouds of white dust.

The giants were greatly surprised, and very much impressed. They begged him to come and live with them, and promised him great wealth and happiness. Lucky decided that he would stay with them for a few weeks, so he followed the giants to their woodland home.

One day a huge rhinoceros came to the forest where the giants lived. The rhinoceros is a very large animal with thick wrinkled hide and a sharp strong horn on its nose. This beast did so much damage that the giants set out to hunt and kill it. They asked Lucky to go with them and help to get rid of the savage monster. He was really much too afraid to go, but at the same time he could not very well refuse.

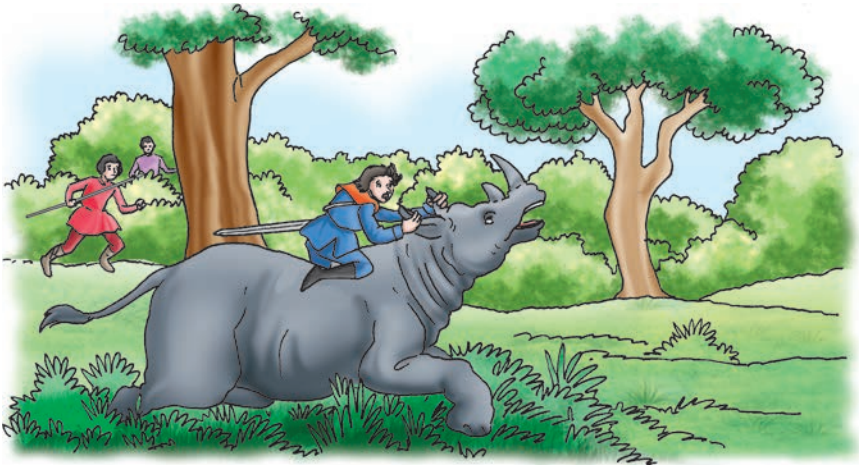
“I will follow you in a few minutes,” said Lucky, “as I must first sharpen my sword.”

As soon as the giants had gone, Lucky, instead of sharpening his sword, climbed up a nearby tree to hide.

Presently who should come by but the dreadful rhinoceros grunting and snapping angrily. It lay down for a rest under the very tree in which Lucky was hiding. Suddenly the giants appeared and gave a great shout when they saw the rhinoceros. Poor Lucky almost fainted with terror, lost his hold of the branch, and fell right on top of the rhinoceros.

Up jumped the beast and away he went at full speed. Lucky clung on with both hands to the creature’s ears as he was jolted and bumped through the forest.

Hot on their heels followed the seven giants and, after much racing and chasing, they managed to kill the beast with their spears. Instead of thanking the giants for saving his life, Lucky pretended to be very angry with them.



“Have you no sense! Could you not see that I was trying to tame the animal?” he cried. “That beast would have been very useful to us. It was so big and strong, and just what we needed to pull our heavy loads for us.”

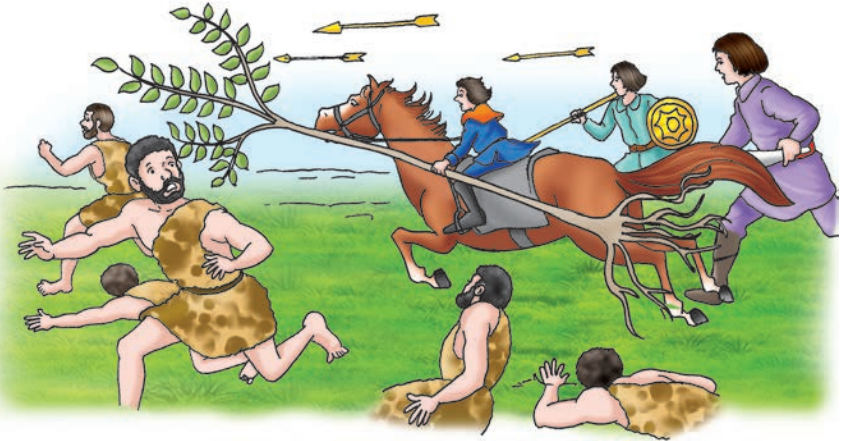
The giants said nothing but stared in astonishment at the brave little man who had tried to tame such a savage animal. They were now quite sure he must be the bravest man in the world.

About a month after this strange adventure with the rhinoceros, a loud shouting was heard near the woodland. A tribe of savages were on the warpath and were seeking to kill the giants and their friends. The giants came to Lucky and asked him to lead them against the enemy, but he made the same excuse as before that he must first sharpen his sword.

When the giants had departed Lucky trembled with fear. He was much too timid to lead them, yet he knew that he could not refuse to help them. After a few minutes, Lucky chose the quietest-looking horse he could find and followed on the trail of the giants.

All went well until the horse heard the sounds of fighting. At once the creature went wild with fright and raced off like





the wind. Poor Lucky tried to stop the animal by clinging to a young tree, but the tree came up, roots and all, in his arms.

Away sped the terrified horse into the thick of the fight. The tree, which Lucky carried, scattered the enemy right and left and soon the savages fled in terror from the battle.

It was some time before Lucky could manage to control the horse and return to his friends, but when he did so, the giants welcomed him with open arms. They led him back to their camp with songs of joy and praise, and there he dwelt as a hero for the rest of his life.



## Interesting Facts about Giant Things Biggest – Highest – Longest



1. The **highest mountain** in the world is **Mount Everest** between Nepal and Tibet. It is over 8,848 metres high, and was first climbed on 29 May 1953, by a party of British climbers led by Colonel Hunt. The top was reached by a New Zealander, Edmund Hillary, and “Tiger” Tenzing Norgay, a Sherpa, and a native of Nepal.
2. The **longest rivers** in the world are the **Amazon** in South America and the **Nile** in Africa.
3. The **Burj Khalifa** is the **tallest man-made structure** in the world. It is about 830 metres above ground level. It gained this title at its opening in 2010.
4. The **longest bridge span** in the world is the main span of the **Akashi Kaikyō Bridge** also known as the Pearl Bridge, Japan, approximately 1,991 metres, making it 75% longer than the **Humber Bridge** in the UK.
5. The **largest ocean** is the **Pacific Ocean** and represents nearly 46 per cent of the Earth’s water surface and has an area of 165,200,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The **deepest** part of the Pacific Ocean is the **Mariana Trench** at 10,911 metres.
6. The **longest wall** in the world is **The Great Wall of China**, which is over 8,850 kilometres. It was built

over 2,000 years ago to keep enemies from invading the country. It is one of the few man-made structures which can be seen from space.

7. The **longest caves** in the world are the **Mammoth Caves** in Kentucky in the United States. They stretch underground for over 640 kilometres, and in them are rivers and lakes of black water, which contain fish without eyes.
8. The **largest palace** is the **Imperial Palace**, Beijing, China.
9. **Prelude** is the world's largest ship. It is about 488 metres long.



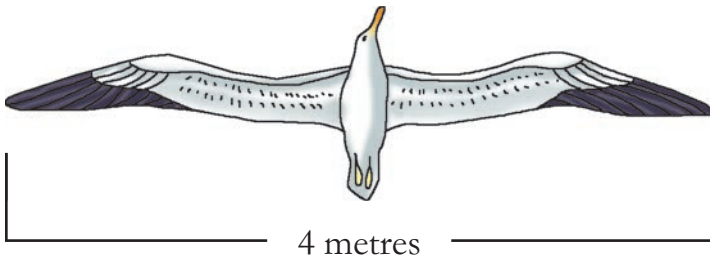
10. The **tallest tree** in the world is the **sequoia** or **redwood tree**, which grows in the United States. This giant tree often reaches a height of 115 metres and has a trunk 11 metres thick.
11. The **largest country** is **Russia**. It is about 5 times the size of India.



12. The **largest creature** in the world is the **blue whale**. It is not a fish but a **mammal**. Their homes are the cold polar seas although they spend winter in some

of the warmer oceans. The **largest fish** is the **whale shark**.

13. The **largest animal** living on land is the **elephant** although it could be said that the **giraffe** is the **tallest**.
14. The **largest bird** in the world is the **ostrich**. It cannot fly but is a very fast runner. The **largest flying bird** is the **albatross**. It looks just like a huge seagull. The albatross feeds on fish and is to be seen in the Southern Oceans. Measure 4 metres on the wall and you will have an idea of the wingspan of this huge bird. Compare this with the smallest bird, the **bee hummingbird**, which is approximately 6 centimetres long.



### □ Do You Remember?

1. What was the title of the story?
2. What words did Lucky put on his sword?
3. What did he take with him on his journey?
4. Where did he put it when he went to sleep?
5. Who chanced to pass while he was sleeping?
6. What did they ask Lucky to show them?
7. What did he do to impress them?
8. Where did Lucky decide to stay for a few weeks?

9. Why did the giants wish to kill the rhinoceros?
10. Where did Lucky hide?
11. How did he come to be on the back of the rhinoceros?
12. What did Lucky say to the giants after they had killed the rhinoceros?
13. Who came to attack the giants?
14. What happened when Lucky's horse heard the sounds of fighting?
15. Describe how Lucky scattered the enemy in the battle.

### Questions on the Interesting Facts

1. (a) Which is the highest mountain in the world?  
(b) Where is it?  
(c) Which are the longest rivers in the world?  
(d) Through which countries do they run?
2. (a) Which is the tallest building in the world?  
(b) In which city is it?  
(c) Name the longest bridge span in the world.  
(d) In which country is it?
3. (a) Name the largest ocean in the world.  
(b) What is the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean called?  
(c) How deep is it?
4. (a) Name the longest wall in the world.  
(b) How long is it?  
(c) Why was it built?
5. (a) Name the longest cave in the world.  
(b) In which country is it?

- (c) How long is it?
  - (d) What is strange about the fish which live in its water?
6. (a) Which is the largest palace in the world?  
(b) Where is it?
7. (a) Name the largest ship in the world.  
(b) How long is it?
8. (a) Which is the tallest tree in the world?  
(b) How high does it grow?  
(c) How thick is its trunk?
9. (a) Name the largest creature in the world.  
(b) Where does it live?  
(c) Which is the largest fish?
10. (a) Which is the largest land-living animal in the world?  
(b) Which is the tallest animal?
11. (a) Which is the largest bird in the world?  
(b) What is strange about it?  
(c) Which is the largest flying bird in the world?  
(d) Where does it live?

## Can You Tell?

1. The story could be called “Lucky and the *Seven Giants*.”  
What number is missing in each of the following?
- (a) Cinderella and her \_\_\_\_\_ ugly sisters
  - (b) Goldilocks and the \_\_\_\_\_ bears

- (c) Old King Cole and his fiddlers \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Snow White and the \_\_\_\_\_ dwarfs
- (e) Ali Baba and the \_\_\_\_\_ thieves
2. The rhinoceros *grunted* angrily.  
growls, screams, roars, bellows, barks, hisses
- Which of these sounds do the following creatures make when they are angry? Use each word once only.
- (a) The dog \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) The lion \_\_\_\_\_.
- (c) The bear \_\_\_\_\_.
- (d) The bull \_\_\_\_\_.
- (e) The snake \_\_\_\_\_.
- (f) The eagle \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Put these creatures in order of size (smallest first).
- (a) rhinoceros, fox, mouse, elephant, rabbit
- (b) hen, canary, ostrich, swan, parrot
- (c) goldfish, shark, flying fish, tadpole, catfish
4. This story was about giants. Who are the following lines about?
- (a) Little \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ lost her sheep.
- (b) Little \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ sat in a corner.
- (c) Little \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ sat among the children.
- (d) Little \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ sat on a tuffet.
- (e) Little \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ went to visit her grandmother.

5. Put the following words in their right places in the sentence.

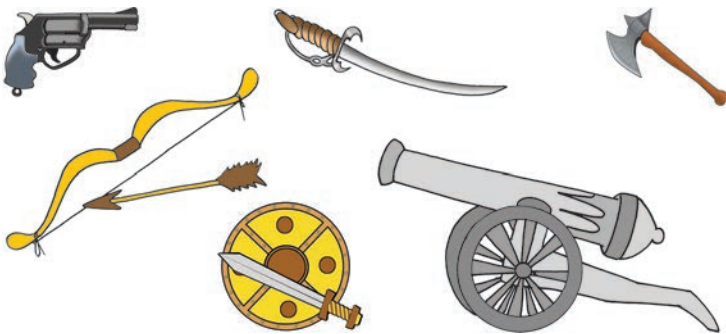
brave, timid, nervous, courageous, frightened,  
bold

Although Lucky was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_, the giants thought he was  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

6. A giant is a very tall man.

Write what kind of people the following ones are.

- (a) hero (b) miser  
(c) bully (d) coward  
(e) dwarf (f) glutton  
(g) hermit
7. In your village, town or city, which is the  
(a) biggest shop? (b) highest building?  
(c) longest road? (d) biggest bridge?  
(e) oldest house?
8. Lucky had a sword and the giants used spears. What  
are the following?





## 2

# The Pony Express



The first settlers of America lived along the coast and did not go far from the sea because of the great forests and high mountains that barred their way. After a while, however, some brave hunters and fur traders began to travel beyond the forests and mountains. Quite often they returned with wonderful stories about the rich land and wild animals they had seen.

It was not long before many families made up their minds to go together to this wonderful land that lay on the other side of the mountains. It was a very dangerous journey as they had to fight against Native Americans and bands of robbers. When they found a good place to make their homes, they joined together to build log cabins for each other. In this way, little villages and towns sprang up all over the country.

As people were eager to hear news of their friends, men were hired to carry letters from one place to another. These postmen did not start out until they had gathered enough



letters to pay for the trip. People complained about them as they sometimes took months to deliver a letter.

Stagecoaches were next used to carry passengers, goods and mail between the towns. Even this was too slow for important letters and messages. To meet the wishes of the people for a speedy and safe delivery of letters, the Pony Express was started.

A company bought five hundred swift strong ponies, and built a chain of offices and stables between the East and the West. They also hired eighty of the best horsemen in the country.

These pony riders had to be brave, clever and cool in times of danger. Each rider had his own run and had to cover the distance between two stations which were usually about fifty miles apart. They changed their horses every fifteen miles and they made no stop to eat or rest until they reached the end of their journey.

The letters were wrapped in oiled silk because the express rider had to sometimes swim streams in order to avoid

danger. He carried these silk-covered bundles in two small leather pouches strapped to the saddle.

These brave riders faced many hardships and dangers. No matter how cold or stormy the weather, they had to be ready to leap into the saddle and dash forward to the next station. They had to find their way over lonely and dangerous trails. Often bands of Native Americans or robbers would attack them and they would narrowly escape with their lives.

The best known of the Pony Express riders was William F. Cody, better known as “Buffalo Bill”. He had to seek work when he was fourteen years of age because of his father’s death.

One day young Cody met a man who was hoping to start the Pony Express Company.

“Cody,” said the man, “we are starting the Pony Express in a very dangerous part of the country. It will be hard and exciting work, and we are looking for only the best and most fearless riders. Will you take the job?”

As the pay was very good and he had his mother and younger siblings to support, Cody answered at once, “Thanks. I’ll be glad to start work right away.”

It was not long until Cody made the longest Pony Express ride on record. After a trip of more than a hundred miles he reached the station only to find that the next rider had been killed by Native Americans. There was no one to go on with the mail and this brave lad felt that it was his duty to do so. He changed ponies and went off on another long dangerous ride.

Cody nearly lost his life on this part of the journey. Shortly after leaving the station he was ambushed by a band of Native Americans on the warpath. They surrounded

him but he escaped by suddenly lying flat on his horse and charging through them. There was a long and exciting chase but he managed to avoid capture.

When he arrived at the next station, Cody discovered that he must return at once with a very important message. Off he went again by the same way as he had come and, although he was very tired and weary, the mail was delivered on time. In all, he had ridden about three hundred miles, stopping only to change to fresh ponies.

With the coming of the railway and the telegraph, the Pony Express stopped, as it was no longer needed. William Cody soon found a job with the railway company. He hunted and killed buffaloes in order to supply meat to the men who were building the railway. That was how he came to be called “Buffalo Bill”.



## Interesting Facts about Sending Messages

1. Long, long ago, messages were carried from one place to another by **men on foot**. At one time in Scotland, when news of danger was received, a small wooden cross was made, set alight and carried by runners from village to village.
2. Another old way of sending messages was to light fires on the tops of certain high hills. These **beacons** formed a chain through the country and the news of danger spread very quickly.
3. In order to get letters delivered much more quickly and safely, **men on horseback** were used instead of runners.
4. When a regular service was started, letters and goods were sent by **mail-coach**. Sometimes the coach had to be guarded against robbers and highwaymen.
5. Native Americans used to send messages by means of smoke signals. This was done by waving a large skin over a smoking fire. African tribes sent messages by playing on big drums called **“tom-toms”**.
6. Messages were sometimes sent by **carrier-pigeons**. These birds, when set off, returned to their home lofts with the notes tied to their legs.  
**Dogs** were often used to carry special messages at the battle-front many, many years ago.
7. Messages were also sent using flags. This is called **flag semaphore** and is still used in maritime activities. Flag signals like these could only be used during daytime.

During the night messages were sent using **signal lamps**. These used light flashes following “**Morse code**”.

8. The **postal service** is used to send letters and parcels to all countries. Here are the various stages:

Stamped letter put in post box – collected by postman in van and taken to sorting office – address read by sorter and letter put along with others to be sent to the same place – carried in special bags by motor, train, boat or plane to the nearest sorting office to the address on the letter – delivered to house by postman.

9. The **telephone** (landline or mobile) is a very quick and handy way of speaking to someone and has become essential for day-to-day living. A **facsimile** (or **fax**) **machine**, which is connected to a telephone line, is a quick way of sending letters or messages all over the world.
10. **Radio** and **television** are used to show worldwide news and entertainment. The **Morse code** is an alphabet system in which letters are represented by combinations of long and short signals of light or sound.
11. **Computers**, which store and process information at very high speeds, are used in every walk of life, e.g. home, business and education. When linked to the **Internet**, you can send and receive messages, sounds, pictures and videos from all over the world instantly through **optical fibre networks**.

## □ Do You Remember?

1. What was the title of the story?
2. Where did the story take place?
3. Where did the first settlers live?
4. Why was it dangerous to go beyond the forests and mountains?
5. Why did the people complain about the first kind of postmen?
6. What were next used to carry passengers, goods and mail?
7. How many ponies did the Express Company buy?
8. How many horsemen did they hire?
9. How far apart were the stations?
10. The riders changed their ponies every \_\_\_\_\_ miles.
11. How did the express riders carry the letters?
12. Who was the most famous of the Pony Express riders?
13. At what age did he start work?
14. Why did he have to begin work so young?
15. One day Cody reached the station to find \_\_\_\_\_.
16. What did he do?
17. How did he escape from the fury of Native Americans?
18. Why did the Pony Express stop altogether?
19. Where did William Cody find his next job?
20. Why was he called “Buffalo Bill”?

## ❑ Questions on the Interesting Facts

1. How were messages sent in olden times?
2. Where were beacons lit to pass on messages of danger?
3. What later took the place of messengers on foot?
4. When a regular service was started, how were letters and goods sent?
5. (a) How did Native Americans sometimes send messages?  
(b) How do some African tribes send messages?
6. (a) How do pigeons carry messages?  
(b) Which creature was sometimes used to carry messages in wartime?
7. (a) How did the army and navy send messages  
(i) in daytime, (ii) at night-time?  
(b) What name is given to the alphabet of long and short signals of light and sound?
8. What happens when you post a letter?
9. (a) What is a very quick and handy way of speaking to a person?  
(b) What is a quick way of sending letters and messages?
10. Name the mediums used to show news and entertainment?
11. (a) What can store and process information at high speeds?  
(b) With what, when linked to a computer, can you receive and send messages, sounds, pictures and videos from all over the world?



## □ Can You Tell?

1. Write a letter to your best friend and tell him/her what you did last weekend.
2. Give the plurals of the following words.  
knife, story, tooth, sheep, thief, buffalo, child,  
postman, deer, valley

3. A pony sleeps in a **stable**.

Write which animals sleep in the following places.

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| (a) sty    | (b) kennel |
| (c) burrow | (d) pen    |
| (e) earth  |            |

4. The rider was attacked by a **band** of robbers.

What name is given to a number of: sheep, cattle, trees, thieves, wolves?

5. Name four different ways in which mail can be carried from one place to another.
6. How much does it cost to post a letter?
7. Name four different ways of sending messages.
8. A pony is **not** a **young** horse. It is a special kind of **small** horse.
  - (a) What is the long hair on a pony's neck called?
  - (b) Of what use is a saddle?
  - (c) How is a pony guided?
  - (d) Why are iron shoes put on the hooves?
  - (e) What is a bit?

### 3

## A Narrow Escape



One bitterly cold day, when a mother Polar bear and her cub were walking slowly along the ice near their Greenland home, a heavy snowstorm came on, and somehow the little bear lost her mother.

She was a beautiful young polar bear – pure white all over, with a well-shaped tapering head, a rather long neck, and a slim graceful body. She had fur even on the soles of her feet, so that she should not slip about on the ice and perhaps hurt herself.

As soon as she discovered that she had lost her mother, the little cub raised her nose high in the air and sniffed several times; then she put out her tongue and licked some of the falling snowflakes. Uttering a funny little noise, she walked slowly and timidly through the blinding snow, hoping to find her parent. On and on she went, little knowing poor thing, that instead of going after her mother, she was walking in the opposite direction.

She became frightened and miserable, and although she did not feel the cold, the little cub did not like the howling wind and the cutting hail and snow, which came down in such thick clouds. After she had wandered about for some hours, she began to feel very lonely and hungry. Although she was several months old, she still liked nothing better than to cuddle in close to her mother's warm body after a good meal. Too tired at last to go any farther, the little bear, with a great sob, lay down on the ice and fell fast asleep.

Now this is a most dangerous thing to do in that world of snow and ice. Although they are such big strong animals, polar bears, like all other creatures of the Frozen North, must always keep a sharp lookout for their enemies. As the little bear lay there sound asleep from weariness, a big bull seal suddenly climbed out of the water on to the ice. He noticed the little bear at once, for by this time the storm had died down and it had almost stopped snowing.

The seal would not have attempted to attack a full-grown polar bear, because he would have been too afraid; but to



meet a lonely sleeping baby bear was a different matter. All seals have very large sharp teeth with which they can give terrible slashing bites when they are angry or roused to fight. They can move quickly and gracefully when swimming in the water, but they are only able to waddle slowly and clumsily on land, and this they do in funny little jerks, stopping every few minutes to rest.

As the little cub was still in the Land of Nod, the seal was able to approach quite close to her, and was about to give her a good hard bite, when for some reason or other, the little bear woke up! The young cub was old enough to know that seals were her enemies, so as soon as she saw the fierce-looking seal just beside her, she ran away as fast as she could. This annoyed the seal very much indeed, as he knew he couldn't travel half as quickly as the little bear. He stopped and remained where he was for a few minutes to ponder what he should do next.

The little bear had disappeared round a huge piece of ice out of sight. The seal then decided on his plan of action, moved slowly after her, and went round the piece of ice the other way, so that he would meet the little bear face to face. On he travelled in his clumsy shuffling manner, working his way carefully round, and hoping to meet the young cub at any moment. Suddenly something appeared a few yards ahead of him. To his horror it was not the little bear but the mother polar bear herself!

This was a terrible state of affairs. Polar bears are extremely fond of a nice meal of seal flesh. Instead of being so anxious to find the little bear, he was now only too eager to escape from her mother. In a dreadful fright, the seal turned round and hurried off in the direction he had come. Luckily the old bear did not notice him as she was looking the other way.

The seal decided to go straight into the sea at the nearest point. On and on he waddled hurriedly until he was almost out of breath. He was close to the water's edge, and was about to dive into the sea with a sigh of relief, when to his amazement he saw, a little way off, a school of dangerous killer whales. These huge creatures are the deadly enemies of seals, so it was no wonder that the seal was now scared almost out of his wits.

The whales were sporting in the water, jumping up every now and then, leaping, rolling and tumbling about as if thoroughly enjoying themselves. The seal, tired though he was, turned back once more, and saw the old Polar bear with her little one coming straight towards him over the ice.

The seal now became frantic with fear as his way of retreat was cut off, and it meant either being killed by the powerful polar bear or the dreadful whales. In desperation he stood perfectly still and, strangely, the mother bear appeared to pay no attention to him. She lumbered past, gently pushing her newly found cub in front of her, so that the little one would not get a chance to wander away again.



The seal gave a heavy sigh of relief when they disappeared from view, for now he was able to remain in safety on the ice until the whales had caught as many fish as they wanted and had swum away in another direction. When he finally decided that the coast was clear, the seal slipped into the water once more, and to satisfy his hunger he caught some fish for his supper.

This exciting adventure taught him a lesson for the future. The seal often remembered how he had been cornered between two of his greatest enemies, and how he had so narrowly escaped.

*(Adapted)*

## Interesting Facts about the Arctic Region



1. The **Arctic Region** means the ice-covered sea at the North Pole and parts of the northern extreme of Europe, Asia and America. Only a few creatures are able to live in the parts near the Pole, but in the nearby lands of Alaska, Northern Canada, Greenland, Lapland and Siberia, many animals have their homes.
2. In these lands of long, cold, dreary winters and short summers, no crops can be grown, and man has learned to obtain food and clothing from the animals which live there. Strange to say, the people suffer less

from common illnesses as germs die in the bitter cold. Foods such as bread, butter and meat can be kept fresh for a long time.

3. **Inuits** are the hardy natives of the Arctic region of Greenland, Canada, USA and Russia. In winter, some still live in beehive shaped ice-huts called **igloos**, and eat **fish** and **seal-meat**. Owing to the cold they wear heavy and thick fur clothing. Inuits still travel over the snow and ice by means of sledges drawn by strong wolf-dogs known as **huskies** or by small motorised sledges called **skidoos**.
4. The **Samis** are people who speak the Sami language and live in places like Lapland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. They live in tents and earth-huts and depend on reindeer for milk, meat, clothing and travel. They never stay long in one place as they have to follow their reindeer herds in search of grass and moss.
5. The following are the **land animals** which live in the icy North.
  - (a) The **polar bear** is easily known by his size and snow-white coat of long thick fur. He is a very strong swimmer and lives mainly on seal-meat.
  - (b) The **musk ox** is so named from his musky smell. He has powerful horns and a long shaggy coat.
  - (c) The **caribou** looks like a deer with large broad antlers.
  - (d) The **wolf** is the most dreaded creature of the North. The famine of winter forces him to join a **pack** which hunts prey in open chase.

- (e) The **fox, hare** and **stoat** resemble their brothers of southern lands in appearance and habits. Their coats turn white in winter.
6. Here are the **sea-mammals** which live in the Arctic Sea.
- (a) The **blue whale** is the world's largest creature measuring often twenty-four metres. It lives continually in water and is hunted for its oil.
- (b) The **seal** is able to live on both land and sea as it can still use its limbs as feet or fins. It is hunted for its flesh and valuable fur.
- (c) The **walrus** is a large seal with two big tusks. It is hunted for its oil, hide and ivory.
- (d) The **porpoise** travels with a number of his own kind and feeds on fish.
- (e) The **grampus** or **killer whale** is really a huge **dolphin** who preys on fish, seals and even whales.
- (f) The **narwhal** is a member of the whale family and has a long straight spirally twisted tusk.
7. Most of the feathered creatures who live in this region dwell near the sea and are fish-eaters. They consist of the **Little Auk, Iceland Gull, Skua, Guillemot** and the **Northern Diver**. The two noted birds of prey are the **Snowy Owl** and the **Greenland Falcon**.
8. Great pieces of ice which slide from the land and float on the sea are called **icebergs**. They drift southwards to warm waters where they break up and melt. Only a small part of an iceberg can be seen as there is seven to nine times as much below the water. A field of floating ice is called a **floe**.



9. The **aurora borealis** (sometimes called the **Northern Lights**) is a bright glow of many colours which can often be seen in the northern sky. In the Arctic Region it is a beautiful sight to watch the beams of coloured light dart quickly here and there, crossing and re-crossing, and spreading like a fan across the sky. For several weeks in summer the sun does not set and for the same length of time in winter the sun does not rise.
10. During the last five centuries, many brave and daring men have set out to discover the secrets of this little known part of the world, and they have brought back many thrilling stories of their adventures. Several attempts were made to reach the North Pole. Frederick Cook and Robert Edwin Peary both claim to have reached the North Pole first.

### Do You Remember?

1. What was the title of the story?
2. Where did the story take place?
3. Describe the polar bear cub.
4. Why does a bear not slip while moving about on ice?
5. How did the little bear lose her mother?
6. What did she do when she was too tired to go any farther?
7. Why was this dangerous?
8. Who suddenly appeared and saw the sleeping cub?
9. Describe the seal's movements (a) in water (b) on land.
10. What did the seal decide to do?

OWL



ARCTIC  
TERN



SKUA



POLAR  
BEAR



GUILLEMOT



MUSK OX



WALRUS



CARIBOU



KILLER WHALE/ORCA



FOX



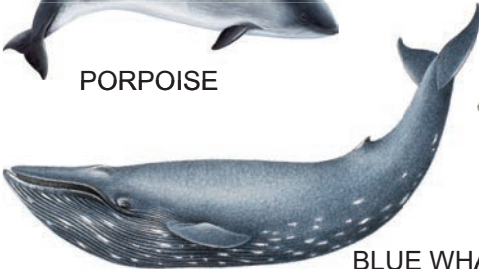
PORPOISE



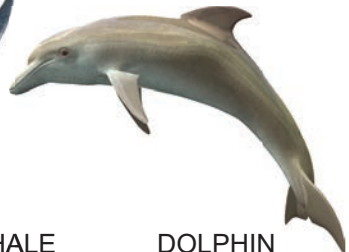
NARWHAL



BLUE WHALE



DOLPHIN



11. What happened when he had almost reached the bear cub?
12. Why was the big seal unable to catch the little bear?
13. When he gave chase whom did he meet?
14. What did the frightened seal do?
15. What did he see when he was about to dive into the water?
16. Why was the seal scared?
17. Worse was to follow. In what position did the seal find himself?
18. How did he escape?
19. What did the seal do when the coast was clear?
20. What lesson for the future did this adventure teach him?

### **❑ Questions on the Interesting Facts**

1. What is meant by the Arctic Region?
2. (a) How do the people of this region obtain food and clothing?  
(b) Why do they not suffer from common illnesses?
3. (a) Who are the Inuits?  
(b) In what kind of house do some stay in winter while hunting?  
(c) What are their chief foods?  
(d) How do they travel from place to place?
4. (a) Who are the Sami people?  
(b) Where do they live?

- (c) On which animal do they depend for food, clothing and travel?
- (d) Why do they never stay long in one place?
- 5. Name and describe two land animals which live in the Icy North.
- 6. Name and describe two sea-mammals which live in the Arctic Sea.
- 7. (a) Name two sea-birds of this region.  
(b) Name two noted Arctic birds of prey.
- 8. (a) What is an iceberg?  
(b) How much of it can you see?  
(c) What is a field of floating ice called?
- 9. (a) Describe the aurora borealis.  
(b) What is it sometimes called?
- 10. (a) Which two explorers claim to have reached the North Pole first?  
(b) Why is travelling to the North Pole dangerous?

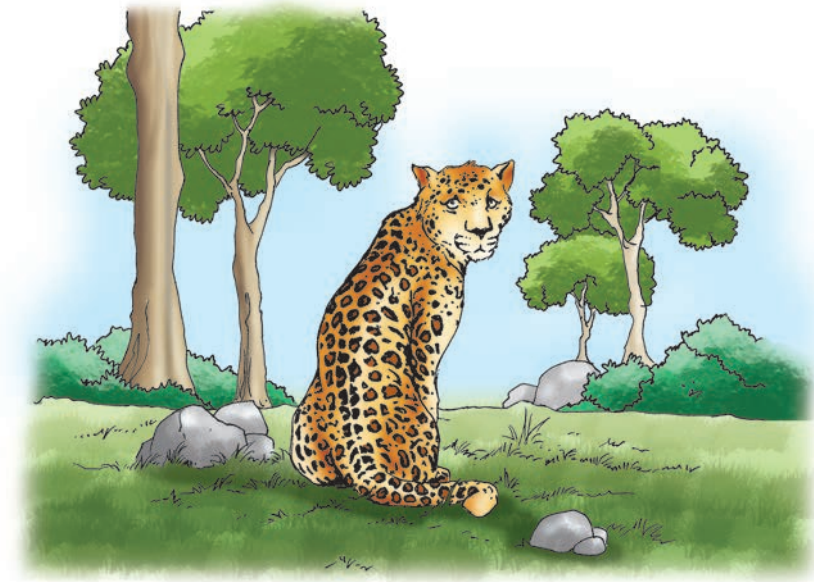
### Can You Tell?

- 1. (a) Point out Greenland on the world map.  
(b) Which ocean washes most of its shore?
- 2. (a) What are the natives of Greenland called?  
(b) Why do few people live there?  
(c) What kind of clothing do they wear in the winter?
- 3. It was a “bitterly cold” day. What other kinds of days can you have?

4. The seal is an animal which lives mostly in water.
- (a) Can you name four other such creatures?
  - (b) Which is the largest sea-mammal in the world?
5. The baby polar bear was called a “cub”. Name as many animals as you can whose young are called cubs.
6. Seals “waddle” slowly and clumsily on land. What kind of movement is meant by the following words?
- waddling, marching, strolling, running,  
lumbering, shuffling, prowling, slouching
7. Complete the following by adding the feminine.
- (a) father and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) brother and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) uncle and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) nephew and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) son and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (f) husband and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (g) man and \_\_\_\_\_
  - (h) boy and \_\_\_\_\_
8. The following list is taken from the story. Give words opposite in meaning to:
- cold, slowly, thick, heavy, lost, beautiful, long,  
slim, high, asleep, strong, sharp, miserable,  
graceful, timidly, retreat, safety, enemies,  
remembered, future

# 4

## Spots



In the centre of a bare patch of ground in the Indian jungle was something that looked like a large stone. But it was not a stone; it was Spots, the leopard.

Spots lay quite still, and allowed the sun to blaze down upon the whole length of his back. The animal grumbled to himself for he was in a bad temper. He ought to have been happily asleep long ago, but he was hungry, and a hungry leopard finds it hard to sleep. He knew that it would be useless to look for food while the sun shone, and so he muttered and growled and wished that the night would come.

Spots was a curious creature. His coat looked worn in places – like a rug that has been too long in use – and here and there the fur had quite gone. He opened his mouth in a mighty yawn, and his teeth showed yellow and stumpy.

He moved rather stiffly and seemed to take no interest in anything around him. Spots was old.

Old age to a wild animal, especially to beasts of prey like the leopard, tiger and lion, is a terrible thing. It always means starvation and, very often, death. Age brings weakness, and in nature, the weak can expect no mercy.

Spots was unable to chase and attack the deer which were such an easy prey to him when he was young. He would look longingly at the cattle and wild boars but was afraid to approach too closely because of the danger from their horns.

Thus Spots, in order that he might live, found himself compelled to hunt human beings. In other words, Spots became a man-eater. It was now his custom to lie hidden near the grazing grounds; to crouch in the bushes near the streams from which the women and children of the villages drew their water; and to lie in the long jungle grass that lined the forest paths. There he would wait patiently until some unhappy woman or child would come near enough for him to spring.

Now, although it is quite an easy matter for a leopard to kill human beings, he must not do it twice near the same place, if he wishes to stay alive. In some mysterious way Spots had found this out, and so he never stayed long after his kill and he would travel a long distance away from the scene of his crime before lying down to rest for the day.

It was because of this cleverness that Spots lived so long. When the men of the village arrived to hunt for him he was far away and could not be tracked down. Spots continued to kill and, all unknown to himself, became quite famous as the leopard which could not be caught.

Forest rangers took an interest in Spots and made many efforts to find him, but in vain. The creature's habit of never going back to a village where he had once killed made it very difficult to know where he was. Tricks of all kinds were tried; traps were cunningly laid; but Spots avoided and escaped them all. At last a reward of five hundred rupees was offered for his capture, dead or alive.

Spots knew nothing about warnings or rewards, but he did know that it was becoming very difficult to find food. Children no longer ran about the villages at dusk. The women drew the water early, and men went through the jungle in couples and armed with heavy sticks.

The old leopard had visited a village the previous night and had waited near the gates of the wooden railings surrounding it. He had gained nothing for his trouble, and had departed in some haste at daybreak when he saw some cattle being driven out to graze. The cattle had detected his presence, and the leader of the herd had charged after him, snorting with fury. A herd boy, who ran after the bull, noticed the tell-tale tracks of the leopard and raced back to the village. There he told the Headman what he had seen.

Word was sent at once to the Forest Officer, who stated that he would come as soon as possible. He clapped his hands and, to the servant who appeared he said, "Tell Badri to come here, please."

In a moment or two, a small brown-faced lad of about eighteen years of age passed silently into the room, saluted, and stood awaiting orders.

"Badri," said the Officer, "we go once more in search of the spotted one, and I think we shall catch him this time."

Badri looked doubtfully at his master and replied, "We have sought for him many times, Sahib."





“That is true,” said the Forest Officer, “but we have searched for him blindly. Here is a picture which I have drawn and it shows every village where the spotted one has killed. Notice that if he kills in the East, then his next raid is in the West, and if he kills in the West, then his next raid is in the East.”

Badri’s eyes flashed. “His last kill was in the East, Sahib,” he said.

“Yes!” cried the Forest Officer, thumping the table with his fist. “Therefore his next foul deed will take place in the West!”

“But there are four villages in the West,” said Badri thoughtfully.

“True,” replied the Officer, “and he has already attacked three of them. Do you see my point now?”

Badri nodded. “We shall await our spotted enemy in the fourth village,” he said and saluted.

Five minutes later the Forest Officer was filling his pockets with cartridges, and Badri was busy cleaning a couple of rifles.

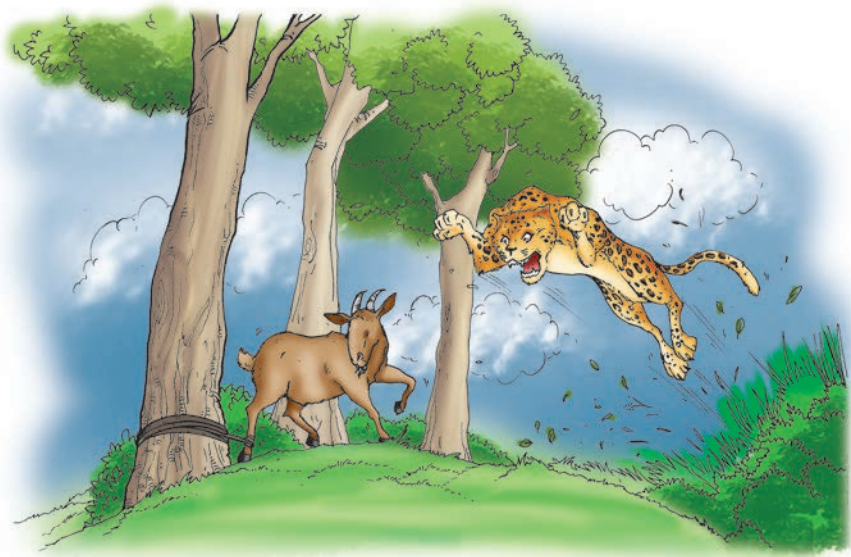
It was late afternoon and the people of the village were already making preparations for the night. The cattle were coming in, herded by the children, and the women were busy about the fires making the evening meal. The men had returned from their work in the fields earlier than usual and were gathered round the Headman, who was looking very important.

From the jungle nearby, a goat bleated. The sound came from a part where three trees stood together. On one of these trees there was something like a large bird's nest. It was at the foot of this tree that the goat was tied.

In this nest, and completely hidden by the leaves and branches, sat the Forest Officer and his tracker, Badri. It had been quickly built by the men of the village that same day, and the two hunters had taken their places in case Spots might make an early evening raid. They sat perfectly still, their feet crossed and their knees apart. The barrel of the Forest Officer's gun poked out amongst the leaves. A rifle lay where it could be easily snatched in case of need.

Badri's eyes examined every bush and tuft of long grass near their hideout. The goat continued to bleat. Suddenly the tracker pulled at the Forest Officer's sleeve and pointed to a large clump of bushes. The Officer looked in the direction of the pointing finger but could see nothing unusual. Then he detected a slight movement and he nodded to his servant as a sign that he had seen.

Spots was crouched beneath the bush and he was watching the goat. He was becoming hungrier every minute, and that



goat was what he desired most in the world. Suddenly the goat strained at the cord which fastened it to a stake. That movement decided Spots. He could not bear the idea of his prey escaping, so he crouched yet lower and silently sprang.

One terrible bite and the goat sank to the earth, dying. Spots bounded away and waited, his tail lashing his sides. Nothing happened. Slowly he returned to his prey and sank down to feast himself. As he did so there was a tremendous crash and something whistled by his head. The Forest Officer had fired but had missed him.

Spots went mad with rage. He would destroy the enemy in the nest. Without warning, he sprang at the tree, and began to claw his way up the trunk. His eyes blazed with a yellow light, and he snarled as he climbed. Up and up he went until his head hit something hard and cold. It was, in fact, the muzzle of the rifle, and the Forest Officer was determined not to miss this time. Quite calmly, he waited for Spots.



Spots halted under the nest and the Officer pressed the trigger. The leopard screamed, pawed the air wildly for a second, and fell in a heap at the foot of the tree. The two hunters descended and looked at the animal which had caused them so much trouble.

“Badri,” said the Forest Officer. “Go to the village and tell the people that they can now sleep in peace as the spotted one is dead.”

Badri smiled, saluted and ran off to tell the joyful news.

## Interesting Facts about the Cat Family

1. Animals must eat food in order to live and may be divided into classes according to what they eat. Some creatures eat the flesh of other animals while others eat grass, leaves, fruits, nuts and roots, and some eat both. Certain animals become hunters and the **cat** family is the kind which seeks, chases and kills its prey.
2. There are many different kinds of cats – some wild, some tame. The wild cats consist of the lion, tiger, leopard, cheetah, panther, puma or cougar, jaguar, lynx and small wild cat. The tame members of the family such as the Persian, Siamese, Manx and ordinary striped or blotched cats, are found in our homes as pets.
3. All cats are well equipped to hunt and kill. Although they do not run much, they can run a short distance at great speed and can spring a long way. Cats have powerful jaws and strong sharp teeth. Their feet have thick soft pads and the claws, five on each foot, are hooked and very sharp. Unlike the dog family they can draw these claws out and in whenever they wish. Cats generally hunt at night-time because they have eyes which enable them to see in the dark.
4. Watch a domestic cat trying to catch a bird. The animal crouches down with its body close to the ground and creeps slowly forward towards its prey. This slow silent approach is called “stalking” and all cats are expert at it. When the cunning hunter is within reach of the bird, he pounces and the victim is caught in his cruel claws. The cat uses a different method to catch mice. He will sit for hours, without a sound or

a movement, waiting till a mouse comes out of its hole. The cat springs and seldom fails to kill or catch the mouse. As the animal depends on quietness and surprise, the cat prefers to hunt alone.

5. Home cats make a sound called **mewing** when they wish to attract attention or want food. They **purr** when they are pleased but spit, hiss, growl, arch their backs, and wave their tails when angry. Cats are generally clean animals and may often be seen cleaning their fur. They dislike dogs and will defend themselves fiercely if attacked. Cats always fall on their feet thus avoiding serious accident.
6. The two largest members of the cat family are the **lion** and the **tiger**. The lion, who is sometimes called “**The King of Beasts**”, is a great reddish-brown cat chiefly found on the great plains of Africa. He differs from other cats in some of his habits for he likes to roar aloud and hunt in company with other lions. The tiger, sometimes called “**The Lord of the Jungle**”, has a brownish-yellow coat marked with broad black stripes. He is a night-hunter and during the day he usually sleeps in the long grass near some pool or river. With the evening, however, this powerful and terrible creature awakens and silently goes in search of prey.
7. The **leopard** has a yellowish-fawn coat with black spots, and when he remains perfectly still among the bushes it is difficult to notice him. A special kind of leopard called a **cheetah** was used in the sport of deer-hunting in India. He has long slender legs and is the fastest runner of all the cat tribe. The powerful

black leopard known as the **black panther** can be found in Asia, Africa and the Americas. They are very strong climbers.

8. The big wild cats of America are the puma, the jaguar, and the lynx. The **puma** or **cougar** is a brownish-grey colour animal. He has marvellous climbing and leaping powers. He is a night-hunter and kills animals such as sheep, cows and deer. The **jaguar** is slightly larger than the puma and very like the leopard in appearance. He is a very cunning hunter and his prey consists mainly of cattle, horses and wild pigs. The **lynx** is found in many countries in the Far North and varies in colour. He is a fine climber with keen sight and he spends a great part of his life among trees or mountains.
9. Many kinds of small wild cats live in different parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. Because of their way of life they are much stronger than house cats and their thicker, longer fur makes them look larger and more frightening. They stalk their prey and hunt such creatures as rabbits, hares and birds. The **Scottish wild cat** lives in the forests, moorlands, and mountainous parts of northern Scotland.
10. Several thousands of years ago in Egypt, the cat enjoyed honour and glory such as he has never known since and may never see again. At first he was a very important creature because he protected the stores of corn from rats and mice. Then praise became worship and he was regarded as a sacred animal. Temples were erected in his honour.

## □ Do You Remember?

1. What was the title of the story?
2. To which creature does it refer?
3. How could you tell that Spots was old?
4. Why did the leopard become a man-eater?
5. Where did he usually prowl in search of prey?
6. Why was he never caught?
7. Who made many efforts to catch him?
8. What reward was offered for his capture?
9. Who noticed the animal's tell-tale tracks?
10. What did he do?
11. To whom was the news sent immediately?
12. What was the tracker's name?
13. Describe the picture which the Forest Officer had drawn.
14. Where did the Forest Officer and his tracker hide?
15. What trap had they set for the leopard?
16. Who first noticed Spots?
17. Describe the hungry animal's attack on the goat.
18. What happened to the Forest Officer's first shot?
19. How did Spots meet his death?
20. What instructions did the Forest Officer give to Badri?

## □ Questions on the Interesting Facts

1. (a) What must animals eat in order to live?  
(b) Name an animal family which seeks, chases and kills other creatures.



2. (a) Name five different kinds of wild cats.  
(b) Name three different kinds of tame cats.
3. (a) What helps a cat to walk silently?  
(b) What is the difference between a dog's claws and a cat's claws?  
(c) Why does a cat generally hunt at night-time?
4. (a) Describe how a cat hunts a bird.  
(b) Describe how a cat hunts for mice.
5. (a) What kind of sound does a cat make when
  - (i) it wants food?
  - (ii) it is very pleased?  
(b) Which animal does a cat usually dislike?
6. (a) What title is sometimes given to the lion?  
(b) How does he differ in habits from other cats?  
(c) What title is sometimes given to the tiger?
7. (a) Which great cat is the most dangerous to man?  
(b) For what purpose was a cheetah used?  
(c) What is the black leopard also known as?
8. (a) Name three big wild cats which live in America.  
(b) The three animals are very good at \_\_\_\_\_.
9. (a) Where do small wild cats live?  
(b) What does the Scottish wild cat hunt?
10. (a) In which country were cats worshipped and considered sacred?  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_ were erected in honour of cats.

## □ Can You Tell?

1. Complete the following table. The first one is done for you.

FATHER	MOTHER	YOUNG
(a) lion	lioness	cub
(b) tiger	_____	_____
(c) bull	_____	_____
(d) stallion	_____	_____
(e) tomcat	_____	_____
(f) billy goat	_____	_____

2. We say “as brave as a lion”. Complete the following by adding the name of an animal.

- (a) as heavy as an \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) as cunning as a \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) as fast as a \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) as stubborn as a \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) as strong as a \_\_\_\_\_

3. When we speak of a certain shade of colour we sometimes say it is the colour of a well-known object, like this: sea-green. Which colour is missing from each of the following?

snow \_\_\_\_\_, sky \_\_\_\_\_, blood \_\_\_\_\_,  
primrose \_\_\_\_\_, nut \_\_\_\_\_

4. The lion, tiger and leopard have colours which help them to approach their prey without being seen. Name three animals which have a colouring which helps them to escape from their enemies.

5. The creatures of the cat family attack their prey with teeth and claws. How do the following creatures attack or defend themselves?  
elephant, alligator, buffalo, horse, wasp, crab, snake, hedgehog, rabbit, snail
6. Rewrite the following sentences using the plurals of the words in italics.
- (a) The *fox* disturbed the *sheep*.
  - (b) The *lion* killed the *ox*.
  - (c) The *wolf* attacked the *deer*.
  - (d) The *child* ran to the *calf*.
  - (e) The *mouse* ran into *that* small *hole*.
7. Join each of the following pairs of sentences to form one sentence, without using “and”, “but” or “so”.
- (a) The tiger crouched in the long grass. He was about to spring on his prey.
  - (b) The hunter saw a leopard. He raised his gun to shoot it.
  - (c) In Egypt cats were worshipped. They were considered sacred animals.
8. Explain the meaning of each of the following sentences.
- (a) It was raining cats and dogs.
  - (b) The stupid boy let the cat out of the bag.
  - (c) A cat may look at a king.
  - (d) He behaved like a cat on hot bricks.
  - (e) When the cat's away, the mice will play.