

# THE SCREAMING HAIRY ARMADILLO

A Discussion Guide—Grades 3–6  
Aligned to Next Generation Science Standards

## Think Like a Scientist

- > How do we identify different animals?
- > How do animals get their names?
- > How is classification useful to scientists? How is it useful to you?
- > What is the difference between a *scientific name* and a *common name*? (formal vs informal)
- > When would you use the scientific name of an animal rather than the common name? Why?
- > Why are *scientific names* important?
- > Why are *common names* important?
- > What structural features and characteristics are used to name and identify different animals?

## Have Fun with Names

1. Inspect and discuss the front and back cover illustrations from *The Screaming Hairy Armadillo* by Matthew Murrie and Steve Murrie.
2. Create a chart and discuss some of the unique animal names. Invite students to make predictions about why each animal has been given a particular name.
  - Long-wattled umbrellabird
  - Vampire squid
  - Red-lipped batfish
  - Hickory horned devil
  - Monkeyface prickleback



3. Have students take out a blank piece of white paper and colored markers, pencils, or crayons. Ask them to visualize a “candy-striped hermit crab” and draw what they think it looks like. There are also **candy stripe shrimp** and **candy striped pleco** (a fish).
4. What do you think all these creatures have in common?
5. How does your knowledge of language and word origins give insight to common animal names?

**Examples:**

**Hippopotamus** means “river horse” in Greek.

**Octopus** means “eight-footed” in Greek.

**Rhinoceros** means “nose-horned” in Greek.

**Raccoon** comes from an Algonquin word that means “he scratches with the hands.” In many languages, raccoons are known as “wash-bears,” which refers to how they wash their food before eating it.

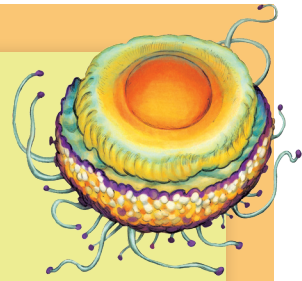
*Now That You've Read the Book*

- > How do physical and behavioral traits help animals survive?
- > How does the variation among individuals affect their survival?
- > How do the structures and functions of living things allow them to meet their needs?
- > Why adapt?
- > How do animals' different body structures relate to their ability to adapt to their environments?
- > How do animals interact with the environment in order to prolong their survival?
- > How does a species' individual variations provide it with an advantage in surviving in its environment?

**Read the following statements about animal adaptations and how they survive. Find examples from the book that prove the statements to be true.**

- > Animals need adaptations to protect themselves from enemies.
- > In addition to body features, adaptations can be behaviors.
- > Animals can use adaptations to warn enemies before they attack.
- > Animals have different body parts to help them move in the air, the water, and on land.
- > Living things have a variety of adaptations.

- > Adaptations can include size, color, shape, behavior, and other features.
- > Many adaptations help living things survive in a particular type of place.
- > Different animals may have similar traits but use them differently.
- > An animal's behavioral adaptations help it live in its specific habitat.
- > Animals have physical and behavioral adaptations.
- > Compare and contrast two of the animals you read about. Create a PowerPoint presentation on how they are alike and different.
- > Create a camouflage pattern for an animal living in a specific dry land or aquatic environment.
- > Design and construct a model of a habitat for an animal with a specific adaptation.



### *Thoughts and Opinions*

- Do you know the meaning of your name? Is there a story or person connected to your name?
- Should science be creative? Why?
- In your opinion, which animal has the craziest name?
- In your opinion, which animal has the most interesting name?
- If you could rename any animal in the book, which one would it be and what new name would you give it?
- Some animals have the ability to change colors to blend in with their surroundings. If you could change colors, what colors would you change to? When would your color-changing abilities “activate”?
- Many animals wear their skeletons on the outside of their bodies instead of carrying them on the inside like you. How would your life be different if your skeleton was on the outside?
- Can “weird” be useful or wonderful? How so?
- What’s the funniest thing you’ve ever seen an animal do?

### *When People Interact with Animals*

- What are examples of scientists using names to create awareness or encourage others to take positive actions?
- In what ways have human activities affected the lives of some of the animals in the book? In what ways have human actions helped the lives of animals?
- How do your actions affect animals around you? How do your actions affect animals far away from you?

- How are some animals in the book affected by climate change?
- What are examples of how scientists have impacted individuals or society?
- How can learning about animals with wacky names help protect animals and their environments?

## Writing Prompts

1. Some animals aren't poisonous at all, but they pretend to be—and it works! The world is full of sly animals with silly names who use deception to avoid being devoured. Describe a time that having a deceptive feature would help you protect yourself!
2. Write a letter to one of the animals inviting it over for dinner. How will you accommodate this animal? What will you serve?
3. Pretend you just spent a day as an animal in the book. Create a journal entry in their personal diary.
4. What animal do you personally identify with from the book? How are you alike?

## Go Deeper

### Discover and Take Action

Find an existing animal with a wacky name you think should be in *The Screaming Hairy Armadillo*. Make an argument for its inclusion by sharing what you can discover about how it got its name and at least one fact about it that is more incredible than its name!

### Think and Do

Reclassification of *The Screaming Hairy Armadillo*: Replace the existing chapter names and classifications (Funny Names, Magical Names, Fierce Names, Delicious Names) with new names and classifications to reorder the animals in the book.

### Predator vs Prey

Take an animal from the book and think about one of its predators or prey you read about. Make a Venn diagram in which you list three things unique to the animal, three things unique to its predator or prey, and three things they both have in common.

### Animal Band

If you could start a band with any animals from the book, which animals would be in the band? What instruments would each play? What would be the name of the band and the name of their tune?

### Animal Interview

Imagine you got an opportunity to interview any animal in the book. What are three questions you'd like to ask it? How do you think it would respond?

### Animal Superhero

Reimagine an animal from the book as a superhero: What is its superpower? What is its superhero name? Is it a superhero or a supervillain? What is the name of its arch enemy? Draw a superhero picture of the animal in action.

## Quiz Yourself

- 1. Which animal only appears to have no teeth when it opens its mouth?**
  - a. Sarcastic Fringehead
  - b. Hickory Horned Devil
  - c. Gummy Shark
  - d. Chicken Turtle
- 2. Which animal poops in cubes?**
  - a. Cookiecutter Shark
  - b. Southern Hairy-Nosed Wombat
  - c. Pancake Tortoise
  - d. Poison Dart Frog
- 3. Which animal is also a cucumber?**
  - a. Headless Chicken Monster
  - b. Banana Slug
  - c. Potato Cod
  - d. Monkeyface Prickleback
- 4. Which animal has a scientific name named after the granddaughter of the scientist who discovered it?**
  - a. Bone-Eating Snot Flower Worm
  - b. Hickory Horned Devil
  - c. Chocolate Dip Damselfish
  - d. Candy-Striped Hermit Crab
- 5. Which animal eats up to 80 percent of its own body weight in a single feeding?**
  - a. Komodo Dragon
  - b. Viperfish
  - c. Pieza Pi
  - d. Lionhead Rabbit
- 6. Which animal shoots a super stinky spray out of its anal glands?**
  - a. Sparklemuffin Peacock Spider
  - b. Wunderpus
  - c. Fried Egg Jellyfish
  - d. Moonrat
- 7. Which animal lives in a “Goldilocks Zone”?**
  - a. Unicornfish
  - b. Cuckoo Wasp
  - c. Yeti Crab
  - d. Wunderpus
- 8. Which animal comes complete with a “butt plate”?**
  - a. Twice-Stubbed Stink Bug
  - b. Pink Fairy Armadillo
  - c. Naked Mole Rat
  - d. Striped Pyjama Squid



## Next Generation Science Standards Grades K–12

3-LS3-Hereditary: Inheritance and Variation of Traits

3-LS4-Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

4-LS1-From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

4-ESS3-Earth and Human Activity

5-LS2-Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

### Multiple Choice Answers

1. (C) Gummy Shark 2. (B) Southern Hairy-Nosed Wombat 3. (A) Headless Chicken Monster 4. (D) Candy-Striped Hermit Crab  
5. (A) Komodo Dragon 6. (D) Moonrat 7. (C) Yeti Crab 8. (B) Pink Fairy Armadillo