

READ THE PASSAGE Think about why the author wrote the passage and what it is mostly about.

The Battle at Kruger

In September 2004, tourist David Budzinski visited Kruger National Park in South Africa. The eight-minute video that he recorded became an Internet sensation and has been viewed by millions of people all over the world.

The video begins with a herd of Cape buffaloes approaching a watering hole. Nearby, a group of lions wait, hiding from their prey. As soon as the lead buffalo spots the lions, it turns, and the chase is on. The lions separate a small Cape buffalo calf from its mother and knock it into the water. The lions surround the calf and work slowly to pull it back out of the water. Before they are successful, however, a hungry crocodile comes by and grabs the calf's back leg with its powerful jaws. Now the lions are trying to fight off the crocodile!

It may sound like the poor calf was doomed, but what happens next is the reason this video went viral and has had over 64 million hits since it was uploaded in 2007.

As the lions and crocodile are fighting over the calf, the other Cape buffaloes regroup and charge the lions! One buffalo flips a lion into the air with its large horns, and the others stomp and snort at the now-frightened lions. The calf, though injured, manages to stand up and return to its mother in the herd. The angry Cape buffaloes then chase the lions away from the watering hole.

The video of "The Battle at Kruger" is a powerful example of why you should never give up hope, even in the face of a seemingly hopeless situation.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- The author's main purpose for the passage is to _____.
 - describe Kruger National Park
 - explain how videos become viral
 - give information about Cape buffalo
 - inspire readers with an exciting story
- Which word best describes the author's attitude about the video of "The Battle at Kruger"?
 - enthusiastic
 - horrified
 - curious
 - amused
- The author would probably agree that the video is popular because _____.
 - the calf was saved
 - there were lions involved
 - the video is short
 - there are many videos online
- Which word best describes the author's intended message?
 - fear
 - hope
 - defense
 - caution

STRATEGY PRACTICE What information does the author give to show the supposed hopelessness of the situation?

READ THE PASSAGE As you read, think about why the author wrote the passage.**A Tale of Two Toxins: The Difference Between Venom and Poison**

You have probably heard the words “venomous” and “poisonous” used to describe an animal that uses toxins, or harmful substances, to hunt other animals or defend itself. But these words have specific meanings, and they are not exact synonyms. To find out when a toxin is a poison and when it is venom, read on.

Venom

Venom refers to toxins that an animal stores in one particular place. Snakes such as rattlesnakes, water moccasins, or cobras are venomous because they have toxins stored in glands that connect to their fangs. Spiders, scorpions, jellyfish, and hornets are all examples of venomous creatures.

Poison

Poison refers to toxins that are found throughout an animal's body. The most colorful example of this type of creature is the poison dart frog. These frogs eat insects that are also poisonous (though not to the frogs), and the poisons in the insects then become part of the thin layer of slime that coats the frogs' bodies. Many insects and even some mammals, such as the slow lorax, are examples of poisonous creatures.

A New Purpose

Whether venomous or poisonous, animals use toxins to defend themselves and to help them hunt for food. But these toxins may have another purpose, too. Scientists are using some toxins to help fight diseases in humans.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- The author's main purpose for writing the passage is to _____.
 - explain how animals defend themselves with toxins
 - describe how scientists use venom and poison
 - inform readers about the difference between venom and poison
 - tell readers how to protect themselves from toxic creatures
- Why does the author include headings in the passage?
 - to list the types of toxic animals
 - to show the topic of each section
 - to compare humans and toxic animals
 - to convince readers that toxins are dangerous
- Why does the author include information about the poison dart frog?
 - to explain why they have slime
 - to give an example of a poisonous creature
 - to link color with being poisonous
 - to tell how scientists are using frog toxins
- What is the author explaining in the section titled “A New Purpose”?
 - how toxins may benefit people
 - how toxins cause disease
 - how each toxin works
 - how each type of toxin is different

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write one question you had while reading the passage.

READ THE FLIER Look for evidence that supports the author's claims.

The Academy of Goose Defense

Dozens of people every year are bitten by rampaging geese.
Don't be a victim! Protect yourself from these feathered bullies!



Take my goose self-defense class today!

Don't let the creeps of the bird world ruin your next park outing. Be the hero of your next picnic by standing up to the geese or running away calmly. Take my class at the Academy of Goose Defense today!

At the Academy of Goose Defense, here is what you will learn:

- **stern and serious commands** for telling a goose to leave you alone. My own studies have shown that geese respond well to specific phrases, such as, "Please take your business elsewhere," and "I do not appreciate it when you hiss like that."
- **secret techniques** to dodge an angry goose. By studying dozens of martial-arts movies, I have created a series of jumps and tumbles that will probably keep you safe from some geese.
- **ways to flee** from a goose without looking like a chicken. When a goose hisses and flaps its wings, it is telling you that it's getting ready to hurt you. I know how to leave the scene safely, without the other geese laughing at me—and I'll teach you, too.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- Which words from the second bullet point suggest that the "secret techniques" might not be very effective?
 - (A) "secret" and "dodge"
 - (B) "probably" and "some"
 - (C) "jumps" and "tumbles"
 - (D) "studying" and "created"
- Why does the author include the paragraph in the lower-left corner?
 - (A) to share information about the academy
 - (B) to explain why geese can be dangerous
 - (C) to give examples of martial arts techniques
 - (D) to persuade people to take the class
- According to the evidence in the flier, it appears that the Academy of Goose Defense _____.
 - (A) is not a worthwhile class
 - (B) offers proven self-defense techniques
 - (C) is taught by a well-trained instructor
 - (D) has been taken many times
- Which phrase from the flier provides the best evidence that geese can be dangerous?
 - (A) looking like a chicken
 - (B) creeps of the bird world
 - (C) bitten by rampaging geese
 - (D) geese laughing at me

STRATEGY PRACTICE Which information in the flier is the most important for determining whether you trust the author? Why?

READ THE PASSAGE Think about the evidence the author presents to support the passage's main points.

Where Is Your Place in the Family?

Birth order—does it matter? Are you different because you are the first, second, or third child in your family—or maybe the last of nine?

A Norwegian study found that first-borns have an average IQ that is three points higher than people who fall into a different place in the birth order, perhaps because first-borns often mentor younger brothers and sisters, which reinforces their own skills. In 2007, an international organization of CEOs found that 43% of CEOs are first-borns, 33% are middle children, and 23% are last-borns. First-borns are more likely to be surgeons and astronauts and earn higher salaries. Additionally, MSNBC cites a study showing that nearly all of the U.S. presidents have been the first-born child or the first-born son in their families.

If first-borns are more successful, last-borns are generally more agreeable. They are also more likely to be funny, possibly to get attention from all the bigger people at the dinner table. Mark Twain and Stephen Colbert were both the youngest in large families, and Jim Carrey was the youngest of four. According to a 2007 *Time* magazine article, "The Power of Birth Order," last-borns are more adventurous and more likely to be artists and entrepreneurs.

Then there are the middle children; we have not ignored them! Many middle children lack one-on-one time with their parents. They often feel short-changed: the oldest gets more privileges, and the youngest is "spoiled." Ignored they may be, but middle children tend to grow into well-adjusted, easygoing adults.

Many factors, including genetics, income, and education, make us who we are, but if the research is correct, birth order may be one of the most important factors.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- Which evidence supports the idea that first-borns may be smarter than their younger siblings?
 - Last-borns tend to be more adventurous than their brothers and sisters.
 - Middle children sometimes feel neglected.
 - First-borns have a higher average IQ than those born later.
 - Middle children tend to be well-adjusted adults.
- Which would be the best evidence that last-borns are likely to be funny and agreeable?
 - facts and statistics
 - the number of siblings each last-born has
 - giving information about last-born IQs
 - supporting opinions
- Which kind of evidence is given about last-born children?
 - statistics
 - IQ
 - a research study
 - a magazine article
- Which idea could use more evidence to support it?
 - CEOs are more often first-born.
 - Birth order can affect IQ.
 - Middle children are easygoing.
 - Last-borns are more likely to be artists.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write one question you thought of while reading the passage. What is the answer?

READ THE PASSAGE Think about why the author wrote the passage.

Do Dogs Dream?

Many people feel that dreams are a uniquely human experience, but just as many dog owners will likely disagree. Commonly reported signs of doggy dreams include shaking legs, muffled barks, and snorting.

Scientists confirm that dogs probably do dream. It turns out that dog brains and human brains have many similarities during sleep cycles. Researchers used special machines to measure electrical activity in a dog's brain and a human's brain. Scientists already knew that when humans dream, a certain part of the brain is active during sleep. Researchers discovered that the same part of the brain is active in sleeping dogs. Scientists have other data that back up these findings.

Many people dream that they are trying to move but cannot. Interestingly, part of that experience is not a dream. When people sleep, the brain releases a chemical that causes the dreamer to become temporarily paralyzed. Researchers think this happens so that people cannot physically act out dreams while they are sleeping. Dog brains release the same chemical. In one study during which this chemical was blocked, sleeping test dogs performed physical activities, such as standing up, sniffing around the room for imaginary rabbits, or chasing phantom tennis balls.

Because of these similarities, researchers believe that the content of a dog's dream might come from the same source as a human's dream. "People's dreams are usually based on things they did that day," says Dr. Samantha Hudspith. "So there's reason to believe that dogs dream about the things they've done that day. Of course, there will never be a way to prove this. Dogs cannot describe their dreams the way that humans can."

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- The author's main purpose for the passage is to _____.
 - interpret the meaning of dreams
 - entertain dog owners with a fun story
 - explain what happens when humans and dogs sleep
 - persuade people that dogs and humans are exactly alike
- Which of these provides evidence that human and dog brains paralyze the body during sleep?
 - data showing that brains are active during sleep
 - Dr. Samantha Hudspith's statement about the content of dreams
 - researchers measuring electrical activity during dreams
 - the study blocking a chemical in the brain during sleep
- Which of these statements would the author most likely agree with?
 - There is much evidence to support the idea that dogs dream.
 - The evidence to support the idea that dogs dream is unreliable.
 - Scientific ideas are not worth considering.
 - Animal dreams are too difficult to explain.
- Which statement best supports the idea that dog and human brains are similar during sleep?
 - Researchers measured brain activities of dogs and humans.
 - Dog and human brains release a paralyzing chemical.
 - Dogs and humans dream about what they did that day.
 - Dogs and humans sleep every night.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Locate and underline the most important information in each paragraph.