

Grade 4 Exemplars

Prompt: Nocturnal animals are awake at night so they have special adaptations. Animal adaptations are special features or behaviors that help animals survive in their environment. Describe the adaptations of these animals, and why they are important. Cite evidence from the texts.

Exemplar A

Animals that are awake at night have adaptations that are important for their survival. For example, owls have large eyes that let them see well in the dark, and their sensitive hearing helps them catch prey. This is important because they use their special senses to help them hunt when it is too dark to see clearly. Bats use a skill called echolocation by making high-pitched sounds that bounce off insects. Since insects are small and can hide easily, this ability helps the bats find food while in total darkness. Lastly, opossums have a great sense of smell, allowing them to find garbage, fruit and insects in the dark. Their noses lead them to sources of food so they can survive. These abilities are important because they help nocturnal animals find food and survive during the night. We should learn more about how to continue to keep these animals safe.

Exemplar B

Nocturnal animals are awake at night so they are active when we sleep. Their impressive skills help them find food and stay safe in the dark.

Opossums have a special sense of smell. They use their sense of smell to find food such as “insects and fallen fruit.” This is important because it helps them to find food in the dark. Also, they can see food in the dark because they have night vision. Once they smell the food, their “large pupils and whiskers” help them track down their meal. These special adaptations help the opossum survive.

Another nocturnal animal is the bat. They find their meals with the power of echolocation. This means they make high-pitched sounds that “bounce off

objects like insects.” This helps a bat to find their next meal. This is an impressive adaptation and makes bats unique. Without echolocation, bats wouldn’t be able to hunt at night. They might not survive if they cannot find food this way since they cannot see.

Lastly, owls also have special abilities to help them at night. Their eyes are big, so they can see even when it's night. They are like “high-powered night vision goggles” which means they can see better and find food more easily than other animals might. On top of that, owls have super hearing. They can hear tiny sounds. This helps them find food like mice and rabbits, even when it’s quiet and dark. They can find food, stay safe, and live in the dark because of these skills.

These cool abilities help animals like bats, owls, and opossums survive at night. Nocturnal animals are amazing because they are so good at living in the dark! Readers should continue to learn more about the amazing creatures that inhabit our world—we’re all part of the same ecosystem.

Exemplar C

Nocturnal animals are awake at night and so they have special abilities that help them survive in the dark. Their unique adaptations are important because they allow them to find food and stay safe when most other creatures, including humans, are asleep.

Bats have a special ability called echolocation which helps them survive. Instead of using their eyes, they make high-pitched sounds that “bounce off objects like insects.” This is a special skill that humans cannot hear, and this important adaptation may help keep the bat safe. This ability is important because bats can find food even when it is completely dark. Without echolocation, bats would not be able to hunt effectively at night.

Owls also have amazing abilities that help them find what they need at night. They have large eyes that work like “high-powered night vision goggles” and allow them to see better in the dark than most other animals. Their eyes are

large which helps them see better at night. Imagine being able to find your food just with the power of your sight! In addition to their great vision, owls can move quietly. They also have special “edges of their wing” that “are soft and fringed”. They let them fly with no noise. This allows the owl to effortlessly hunt small, unsuspecting animals because no one can hear them. These abilities are important because they help owls find prey like mice and rabbits, even when it is dark and quiet.

Opossums cannot fly but they have special skills that help they stay safe and find food too. They use their sense of smell to find food such as “insects, eggs, and other tasty treats.” and “old garbage, rotten food, dead animals or ripe fruit from far away”. This is important because it is dark at night so they would not see the food easily. They can also see food in the dark because they have large pupils that get bigger so they have better night vision. Once they smell the food, this great vision helps them find it.

These special abilities help nocturnal animals thrive in the dark. Without these abilities, these animals would struggle to survive at night. Nocturnal animals are truly amazing because they have adapted so well to life after dark. Let’s protect these incredible creatures by taking care of their habitats and learning more about them.

Below Level Response

Some animals are awake at night. Bats make high-pitched sounds that bounce off things, like insects. This helps bats find food in the dark! Owls have big eyes that help them see in the dark. Their eyes dilate which means the middle gets bigger so they can see better. These animals are amazing because their special skills help them survive in the dark.

Opinion Prompt: Nocturnal animals have developed unique adaptations that help them survive, and even thrive, in the dark. Decide which special abilities seem to be the most interesting and important.

Opinion Exemplar A:

Nocturnal animals have awesome skills that help them survive in the dark. Here are some of the coolest abilities that make them amazing at night. Bats use echolocation. This means they make high-pitched sounds that bounce off objects. This helps them find bugs to eat, even in complete darkness. It's interesting because it is like they can "see" with sound! Owls are super sneaky hunters because they can fly without making a sound. Their special feathers keep them quiet, and their great night vision and hearing help them catch prey without being noticed. Imagine how surprised their prey must be when out of nowhere, swoop and they are in trouble. Opossums are great at sniffing out food in the dark. Their super noses help them find bugs, fruit, and even garbage. Their big eyes help them see at night too. Together these special skills are a surprising and winning combination that most people don't know they have. These amazing skills show how animals survive at night. You might think it would be so tricky to survive in the dark, but for these amazing nocturnal animals, it's their time to shine!

Opinion Exemplar B:

I think bats and owls have the most interesting and important adaptations that help them survive. These help them thrive in the dark.

First, bats can use echolocation to find their food in complete darkness. They make high-pitched sounds that bounce off things like insects, and then they can figure out where the insects are and how far away they are just by listening to the echoes. Imagine being almost able to see without eyes. This helps them catch food even when they can't see it! This is far more impressive than the animals who are hunting with clear vision in the light of day. Imagine finding food with a

blindfold on and just the sound of your voice. It this special ability is interesting because predators who would wake up will not since it is a silent trick.

Another solid and interesting example of a well adapted nocturnal species is the owl. They have huge eyes that help them see really well at night, and their ears are super sensitive, which helps them hear even the quietest sounds from their prey. Plus, their soft feathers let them fly without making a sound, so they can sneak up on animals like mice or rabbits. This allows them to survive in such a challenging environment as a dark forest. Could a human find food with just their sight and hearing? No way, humans need weapons, tools, maps, and other modern inventions just to hunt in the daytime. An owl has everything they need with them all the time which is so interesting.

Overall, nocturnal animals are well-adapted to living in the dark and have such interesting ways they thrive. This keeps them safe and lets them catch just enough food to survive. They do not take more than they need with these special abilities which means they are not greedy which might be the most interesting part in how all animals survive.