

Quiet Creatures: Two Poems

It's nighttime in the jungle, and all seems peaceful. Don't be fooled! Under cover of darkness, a deadly game of hide and seek is being played out. The hiders are animals that feed on plants. The seekers are predators. Predators hunt and kill prey for food. One of the most feared predators is the leopard.

The leopard is a big cat. Adult leopards are about six feet long. They weigh between 100 and 150 pounds. The leopard's coat is sandy-colored with black spots. These markings are good **camouflage**. They make the leopard hard to see as it lurks in the shadows. Few animals are a match for the fast, fierce, powerful leopard.

The Leopard

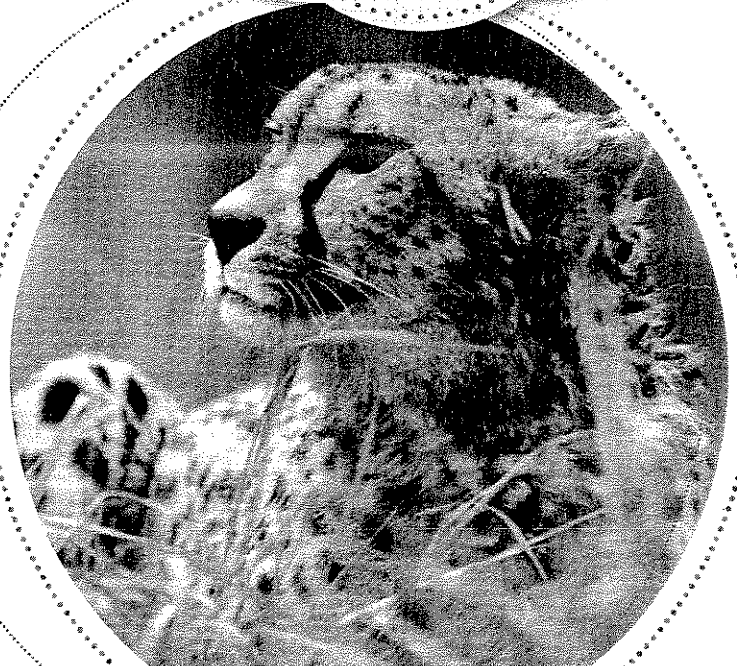
The leopard **creeps** quietly
Creeps in the night
Creeps when the stars
And the moon are bright.

The leopard creeps softly
Up on the hill
Peeps from the bushes
Waiting to kill.

— *Anonymous*

Set Your Purpose

As you read these two poems, try to picture the animals and the scene.



You rarely see or hear the mysterious snake.
Snakes tend to avoid other creatures. They slither
away in a quick, quiet motion.

The Silent Snake

The birds go fluttering in the air,
The rabbits run and skip,
Brown squirrels race along the **bough**,
The May-flies rise and dip;
But while these creatures play and leap,
The silent snake goes creepy-creep!

The birdies sing and whistle loud,
The busy insects hum,
The squirrels **chat**, the frogs say "Croak!"
But the snake is always **dumb**.
With not a sound through grasses deep
The silent snake goes creepy-creep!

— *Anonymous*



Think About It

Why do animals fear the
leopard? How is the snake
different from most other
animals?

Check Your Understanding

Fill in the letter with the best answer for each question.

1. The poem implies that leopards

(A) are the prey of other animals.

(B) are big cats.

(C) eat other animals.

(D) have a sandy-colored coat.

2. We know that we won't hear a leopard come

toward us because

(A) it weighs about 100 pounds.

(B) it is tawny and black.

(C) it creeps when the stars and moon are bright.

(D) it creeps quietly and softly in the night.

3. We rarely see snakes because they

(A) fly away too quickly.

(B) look like leopards.

(C) tend to hide from other creatures.

(D) live in trees.

Vocabulary

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Fill in the letter with the best definition of the underlined word.

1. Brown squirrels race along the bough.

(A) bend forward

(B) spider web

2. When squirrels chat with each other, what

(A) talk happily

(B) fall down

(C) hunt prey

(D) fly away

3. The leopard's markings are good camouflage.

(A) ideas

(B) coloring that makes an animal look

like its surroundings

(C) resembling a camel

(D) shape that makes an animal move swiftly

4. The leopard creeps quietly through

the night.

(A) large, green plants

(B) leaps

(C) moves slowly and quietly

(D) moves quickly and joyfully

5. Other animals make noises, but the snake is always dumb.

(A) singing

(C) talkative

(B) humming

(D) silent

4. Unlike snakes, all the other creatures in the poem "The Silent Snake"

(A) make noise.

(B) crawl through the grass.

(C) never make a sound.

(D) flutter in the air.

5. According to the poems, leopards and

snakes both

(A) are big cats.

(B) creep about quietly.

(C) move about only at night.

(D) eat plants.

Name _____ Date _____

Word Work

Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. For example, *little* and *small* are synonyms.

Read the sentences and the words below. Write the word that means almost the same as the word in dark type.

_____ markings _____ powerful _____ creeps _____ skip _____ dumb

1. The leopard **crawls** softly so it will not be heard.

2. Unlike most animals, the snake is **silent**.

3. The leopard has black **spots** on its light brown coat.

4. Most animals fear the leopard because it is a **strong** predator.

5. The child watched the rabbit **hop** away.

Write Now

Think about an animal that you have watched. Draw a picture of that animal. Then look at the chart below.

- Plan to write a poem describing your animal. First, make a chart like the one shown. Write words that describe your animal's color, body parts, movements, and sounds.
- Write a descriptive poem about your animal. Your poem can rhyme, but it doesn't have to. Use words from your chart. Choose words and sounds that help make the picture of the animal come alive.

- Decide if each underlined word has meaning A or B. Fill in the letter with the correct answer.
- Animals try to hide from predators.

(A) stay out of sight (B) an animal skin
 - A leopard is hard to see through the grass.

(A) not soft (B) difficult
 - What kind of animal is spotted?

(A) type (B) friendly
 - Don't get too close to a leopard.

(A) near (B) shut
 - Sometimes I see squirrels in my yard.

(A) a measurement (B) a grassy area around a house

Some words have more than one meaning. You can often figure out the meaning of a word by looking at how the word is used in a sentence.

1. row (noun) – a line
We sat in the row behind our parents.

2. row (verb) – to paddle a boat
Let's row the boat to the island.

Ways to Describe	Examples
color	red, black, white, green
body parts	wings, paws, tail, hair
movement	fly, run, hop, swim
sound	sing, bark, moo, roar

Name _____ Date _____