

Name: _____ ()

Class: _____

Reading Comprehension

Camels

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

With their humped backs, long necks and long legs, camels have a very unique appearance. Known as the “ships of the desert” for their ability to carry large loads for up to 30 miles a day, camels have been used by humans for over 4000 years, not only as a means of transport but also for their wool, milk, meat and leather. There are two types: the dromedary, which has one hump, and the Bactrian, which has two humps. The dromedary camel is found in North Africa and the Middle East. The Bactrian camel lives in Central Asia.

Camels are well-adapted for survival in the desert. Their large, flat feet help them to spread their weight on the sand so that they do not sink. Three sets of eyelids, two rows of eyelashes and slit-like nostrils that can be squeezed shut protect them from the blowing sand. Surprisingly, their thick coats insulate them from the intense desert heat, while their long legs keep their bodies further away from the hot ground beneath them. Furthermore, they have the ability to stand body temperatures of up to 42°C before breaking a sweat!

However, it's the camel's famous hump that is its most noticeable adaptation. There is a common but mistaken belief that the hump stores water, but it is actually full of fat. When food is not available, camels break the fat in their humps down into water and energy. When all the fat is used up, the hump



shrinks and falls to one side or even disappears. Camels can store up to 80 pounds of fat in their humps which allows them to travel for weeks without food.

Still, camels are incredibly good at conserving water, even though they don't store it in their humps. This is largely because of their red blood cells, which are oval-shaped and more elastic. This allows them to drink large amounts of water. Also, a camel's kidneys are very good at processing its urine so as much water as possible can be saved and reabsorbed back into its body.

All in all, a camel can survive in the desert for anything from a week to 7 months without drinking water, depending on whether it is has to work or not. Its many adaptations make it perfectly suited to its harsh environment.

1. What is stored in a camel's hump?
 - a. fat
 - b. water
 - c. urine
 - d. sand

2. How does a camel's nose help it to survive in the desert?
 - a. Its nostrils are wide to take in more sand.
 - b. Its nostrils can be closed to keep out sand.
 - c. It has one nostril.
 - d. Its nose can store water.

3. What is the longest a camel can survive in the desert without drinking water?
 - a. 7 months
 - b. 1 week
 - c. Two years
 - d. 3 days

4. What shape are a camel's red blood cells?
 - a. circular
 - b. oval
 - c. squared
 - d. triangular

5. Why are camels called "ships of the desert"?
 - a. They look like ships.
 - b. They can swim as fast as a ship.
 - c. They can carry large loads over long distances.
 - d. They make loud noises like a ship.

6. Where can the Bactrian camel be found?
 - a. North Africa
 - b. Middle East
 - c. Europe
 - d. Central Asia

7. How many humps does a dromedary camel have?
 - a. 4
 - b. 3
 - c. 2
 - d. 1

8. Which organ processes a camel's urine?
 - a. kidney
 - b. heart
 - c. its hump
 - d. large intestine

9. At what temperature will a camel begin to sweat?
 - a. 45°C
 - b. 41°C
 - c. 42°C
 - d. 38°C

10. What does **not** help a camel to survive in the desert environment?
 - a. eyelashes
 - b. a thin coat
 - c. large, flat feet
 - d. long legs