

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read the passage and answer questions 1- 5.

### The Hippo's World

1 One of the biggest and most dangerous animals in the world is the hippopotamus. The hippopotamus, or “hippo,” is found in Africa. Though its name can be shortened, everything else about this animal is huge! A hippopotamus can grow to over ten feet long and can weigh over 5000 pounds. A mean fighting machine, the hippo is aggressive and quick to attack anyone or anything that comes too close. Despite their size, hippos can move fast when they are angry. Over short distances, a hippopotamus can run as fast as a man.

2 The word hippopotamus means “river horse.” Hippos are not actually related to horses, but they do like to spend their days in a river or lake. Hippos like to lie and roll around in mud and water. This is called wallowing, and it keeps hippos cool under the hot African sun. Even when a hippo is almost completely underwater, it can hear and see because its eyes and nostrils are on the top of its head. A hippo can close its nostrils, so it can stay submerged below the water's surface for quite a while. Underwater, a hippo can hold its breath for five minutes!

3 Though hippos spend so much time in the water, they do not eat fish. Their main food is grass, and they only eat at night. When the sun goes down, they leave the water and slowly walk, sometimes for miles, until they find a place to graze. When the sun comes up, they return to the lake or river where they make their home.

4 Hippos produce a red oil from their skin. People used to think that hippos could sweat blood! Today we know that this red oil is like sunscreen that helps protect hippos from the sun.

5 Since most animals are afraid of hippos, they have only two real enemies. The first is another hippo that wants to fight. The other is the human race. Though other animals don't bother hippos, insects can cause them lots of trouble, especially in the water. Hippos have surprisingly thin skin, so biting swarms of insects can harm them. If these bites get infected, they can make a hippo sick.

6 A hippo is unable to swat away insects or clean its own skin. Luckily, birds are happy to do these things for them. Why? Birds such as herons, tick birds, and cattle egrets feed on fish and insects in lake and river waters. When they swoop down to the water, they need a convenient perch so they can feed. The broad back of a hippo is the perfect place! Though hippos usually do not get along with other animals, a hippo will allow birds to settle on its back, head, or even, sometimes, in its mouth. When the birds are in place, they peck at and eat the insects that are bothering the hippo. The birds help keep the hippo clean and healthy. In return, the birds get a good supply of food and a nice, safe place to feed. No animal, after all, wants to tangle with a hippo! This kind of partnership, where both sides benefit, is known as mutualism.

7 Today, hippo populations are decreasing. People have taken over some of the lands where hippos used to live. People also hunt hippos for their valuable hides and tusks. Hippos may need the help of people, not just birds, if they are to thrive in the future.

1. Which statement best explains the relationship between hippos and birds described in “The Hippo's World”?
  - A. Hippos and birds help meet each other's needs.
  - B. Hippos do not like any other animals except birds.
  - C. Birds perch on hippos because hippos cannot swat them off.
  - D. Hippos and birds get along because they do not compete for food.
2. Which detail from the article supports the answer to number 1?
  - A. “Today we know that this red oil is like sunscreen that helps protect hippos from the sun.”
  - B. “The birds help keep the hippo clean and healthy.”
  - C. “Hippos have surprisingly thin skin, so biting swarms of insects can harm them.”
  - D. “Today we know that this red oil is like sunscreen that helps protect hippos from the sun.”
3. How does the author of “The Hippo's World” support the claim that humans are the “**real enemies**” of hippos?
  - A. by suggesting that humans should do more to help hippos
  - B. by comparing the mutualism that humans and birds have with hippos
  - C. by pointing out that hippos eat grass and do not hunt like humans do
  - D. by explaining how humans have caused hippo populations to decrease

4. Which detail from the article supports the answer to number 3?

- A. "When the sun comes up, they return to the lake or river where they make their home."
- B. "Hippos may need the help of people, not just birds, if they are to thrive in the future."
- C. "When they swoop down to the water, they need a convenient perch so they can feed."
- D. "People have taken over some of the lands where hippos used to live."

5. What is the text structure of paragraph 1?

- A. description
- B. compare and contrast
- C. problem and solution
- D. sequential order

6. Cite a sentence from the passage to support the answer for number 5.