

Name: _____

Barking Deer

by Guy Belleranti

Imagine a small deer that barks like a dog. If it sounds like an imaginary animal, it's not. It's a real animal called the muntjac.



There are a number of species of muntjacs. The smallest, the Leaf muntjac, may be the world's tiniest living deer. It's only the size of a cat and weighs 10 to 20 pounds. The largest, the Giant muntjac, while much larger than the Leaf muntjac, still only weighs around 90 pounds.

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can be heard for miles, and it warns other muntjacs of nearby dangers. Male muntjacs also bark to attract females during breeding season. Because of this unique barking ability muntjacs are sometimes called the "barking deer".

Both male and female muntjacs have hair-covered bony knobs on their foreheads. Small antlers grow out of these knobs on males. Males also have small, inch-long upper canine tusks. They can use these for protection or to fight for territory.

Most muntjacs live in South Asian countries like India, Burma, China, Sri Lanka and Indonesian Islands. But people did bring one type, the Reeves muntjac, to England in the 1800's. Many now consider this muntjac a pest because it is spreading across Great Britain, eating crops and native plants and damaging wild bird habitats.

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1. Name four predators of the muntjac that are mentioned in the article.



2. The Leaf muntjac is....
- a. larger than the Reeves muntjac
 - b. about the same size as the Giant muntjac
 - c. smaller than the Reeves muntjac
 - d. larger than the Giant muntjac

3.



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4. According to the article, male muntjacs have inch-long upper canine tusks. What does this mean?
- a. They have short antlers on their heads.
 - b. They have one-inch ears above their eyes.
 - c. They have lots of sharp upper teeth inside their mouths.
 - d. They have large upper teeth that stick out of their mouths.

5. On which two continents do wild muntjacs live?

_____ and _____

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. imaginary

a. plant life

_____ 2. tiniest

b. large, spotted cats



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_____ 5. bony

e. thick

_____ 6. pest

f. moving together in a large group

_____ 7. vegetation

g. smallest

_____ 8. dense

h. so thin that you can feel bone

_____ 9. leopards

i. area of land which an animal protects as its own

ANSWER KEY

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1. Name four predators of the muntjac that are mentioned in the article.

tigers, leopards, wolves, and birds of prey

2. The Leaf muntjac is.... **c**
- a. larger than the Reeves muntjac
 - b. about the same size as the Giant muntjac
 - c. **smaller than the Reeves muntjac**
 - d. larger than the Giant muntjac

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- b. They have one-inch ears above their eyes.
- c. They have lots of sharp upper teeth inside their mouths.
- d. **They have large upper teeth that stick out of their mouths.**

5. On which two continents do wild muntjacs live?

Asia and Europe

ANSWER KEY

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

d 1. imaginary

a. plant life

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