

Name: _____

Giant Anteaters

By Guy Belleranti

The volunteer guide at the zoo points out a long-snouted animal to several visitors. "That's a giant anteater," he says. "Look closely and you'll see a much smaller but look-a-like animal on its back. That's the mother's pup. The pup's coloring and dark shoulder stripe matches up with its mother's. That helps hide the pup from predators. The pup spends much of its first year riding on Mom's back. At two years it will be full grown and able to live on its own."



Giant anteaters live in Central and South America. Adults weigh from 75 to over 100 pounds. They are solitary animals, coming together only to breed.



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anteater! An adult giant anteater eats up to 35,000 ants and termites each day, so it visits many mounds.

Because the giant anteater has no teeth, it can't chew its food. Instead, insects are smashed in the anteater's mouth and in its muscular stomach. Sand, soil, and other things swallowed also help smash up the insects.

The giant anteater isn't an aggressive animal. However, it can stand on its back legs and defend itself with its claws. These claws can rip open any attacker, so predators usually look for other prey. The anteater keeps its claws protected and sharp by walking on its knuckles.

The giant anteater has one of the lowest body temperatures of all mammals. It uses its long, bushy tail as a blanket and sunshade. It is a good swimmer and uses its long nose as a snorkel.

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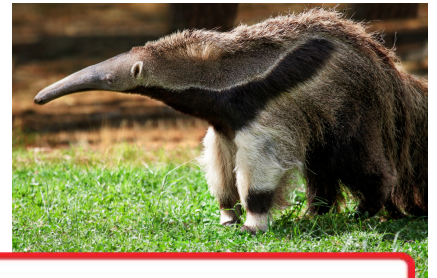
1. *Camouflage* is any markings, coloring, or other physical features of an animal that help it to blend in with its surroundings, either to hide from predators or prey. Give **two examples** of camouflage on a giant anteater.

1. _____

2. _____

2. What is unusual about a giant anteater's mouth?

- a. It has no teeth. b. It has a two-foot tongue.
c. It has a long snout. d. a, b, and c



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5. According to the information in the article, an anteater has a great sense of what?

- a. sight b. smell
c. taste d. hearing

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. _____

y s i l t r a o

hint: living alone

2. _____

m i r t s e e t

hint: tiny bugs that live in large mounds and feed on wood

3. _____

g s a e s i g r e v

hint: likely to attack; hostile



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6. _____

a v i s a l

hint: a watery liquid made by glands in the mouth that helps an animal or human chew, swallow, and digest

7. _____

f e d n d e

hint: protect from harm

◆ **Now Try This:** Find each vocabulary word above in the article and highlight it.

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In the article, "Giant Anteaters," you learned many fascinating facts about these gentle mammals from Central and South America, especially their unusual eating habits.



With an adult's permission, use the Internet to research another animal that is considered an insectivore. On the lines below, tell what class of animal it is (fish, bird, reptile, amphibian, or mammal), where the animal lives, and what types of insects it eats. Be sure to provide the website address you used for information at the bottom of the page.



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Research source I used: _____

ANSWER KEY

Giant Anteaters

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1. *Camouflage* is any markings, coloring, or other physical features of an animal that help it to blend in with its surroundings, either to hide from predators or prey. Give **two examples** of camouflage on a giant anteater.

1. Its coloring

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ANSWER KEY

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. **solitary** y s i l t r a o
hint: living alone

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