

Name: _____

Rockin' Rhinos

by Guy Belleranti

Rhinoceroses rock! They're some of the biggest land animals on earth. In fact, the white rhinoceros is larger than all land animals except the elephant. Some rhinos weigh more than 7,000 pounds, though 5,000 to 6,000 pounds is more common. Even the smallest rhinoceros, the Sumatran, can weigh up to 1,800 pounds. That's heavier than a polar bear!



Despite their huge size, rhinos run fast. They can reach speeds of over 30 miles an hour for short distances. That's faster than a track star!



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looks tough, bugs and sunburn can still be a problem. That's why rhinos roll around in the mud!

their giant horns. Rhino horns have no bone on the inside. Instead, rhino horns are made of keratin. Keratin is the same material in hair, fingernails, and hooves. If a rhino horn breaks, it can slowly grow back, just like your fingernail.

Did you know there are five species of rhinos? White rhinos and black rhinos live in Africa. Each of them has two horns. Even though their names suggest otherwise, both white and black rhinos are actually the same brownish-gray color. The difference between them is

the wide, square-lipped mouth of the white rhino, which is perfect for eating grass, versus the narrow, hooked lip of the black rhino, which is great for pulling leaves off plants. The Sumatran rhino, Javan rhino, and Indian rhinos live in Asia. The Sumatran rhino has two horns, while the



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About the Author



Guy Belleranti is an author of fiction, poetry, articles, puzzles, and humor for children and adults. He also works as a docent at the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences teaching children about the wild animals at the zoo.

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1. Based on what you read in the article, put the following animals in order according to their size, from smallest to largest:

white rhino

polar bear

Sumatran rhino

elephant

2. Which of the words below completes the following analogy?

Mud is to rhinoceroses, as _____ is to humans.



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4. What do all five species of rhinos have in common?
- a. They all live on the same continent.
 - b. They are all the same size.
 - c. All of them are herbivores.
 - d. All of them have two horns.
5. What is one surprising fact about rhinos, in spite of their large size?
- a. Rhinos fit themselves into small spaces.
 - b. Rhinos eat small amounts of food.
 - c. Rhinos become easily scared of other animals.
 - d. Rhinos can run at considerably high speeds.

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

_____ 1. dwindling

a. strong; thick; difficult to damage or harm

_____ 2. hooked

b. one of a kind; unlike anything else

_____ 3. mammals

c. becoming smaller



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_____ 7. destroy

g. curved or rounded like a hook

_____ 8. unique

h. extraordinary; amazing

_____ 9. keratin

i. doing something against the law

_____ 10. incredible

j. a herbivorous animal that resembles a pig and can be found in South and Central America and Asia

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In the article, "Rockin' Rhinos," you learned that there are five species of rhinos. Choose one of the five species mentioned in the article (white rhinos, black rhinos, Sumatran rhinos, Javan rhinos, and Indian rhinos) and write **three interesting facts** about that species.

At least one of your facts should be a characteristic that makes that species different than the others. You may use the Internet, with your teacher's permission. Cite your Internet source on the line provided.



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ANSWER KEY

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1. Based on what you read in the article, put the following animals in order according to their size, from smallest to largest:

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polar bear

Sumatran rhino

white rhino

elephant

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ANSWER KEY

Rockin' Rhinos

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

c. 1. dwindling

a. strong; thick; difficult to damage or harm

g. 2. hooked

b. one of a kind; unlike anything else

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