



Main idea

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

The **main idea** is what a text is mostly about.

As you read about sloths, think about the **main idea of each paragraph**.

Sloths

Sloths are the slowest mammals on earth. It takes a full minute for a sloth to move six feet across the ground. You probably couldn't move that slowly if you tried! The sloth's body is about two feet long. It has long legs and curved claws. Each claw is about three or four inches long. Their claws and their long legs help them climb trees and hang from branches. They spend almost their entire lives hanging from tree branches. A sloth can stick its tongue out twelve inches. Maybe they developed this skill so they wouldn't have to move to reach the tasty leaves and berries around their resting spot. They don't move very much, and the life of a sloth is not very exciting.



Sloths have friendly faces. They have a round head, small ears, a stubby tail and sad-looking eyes set in a dark-colored "mask." The shape of a sloth's mouth makes it look like it is always smiling. It has extra bones in its neck that make it possible for it to turn its head almost all the way around. Sloths are very cute to look at, but they don't put on much of a show.

Sloths are home to other plants and creatures. Tiny plants grow on the sloth's fur, making the animals appear to be green. This green color makes the sloths almost invisible against the green leaves of the trees they live in. Moths and insects also live in the sloth's fur. Maybe the sloths move so little that the small creatures that live on them don't even know they are animals!

Giant sloths, which were the size of elephants, once lived in many places on Earth—including North America. Today, regular-sized sloths can be found in the tropical forests of Central and South America. There are seven different species of sloths, and three of them are considered threatened with extinction. They're in danger because people are cutting down the rainforests where they live. Many tropical forests are disappearing, along with the sloths that live there. Sometimes, people also take them away from the wild when they shouldn't.

It would be a sad thing if these fascinating animals became extinct.

**Multiple choice:**

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - a. Sloths are the slowest mammals on earth.
 - b. It takes a full minute for a sloth to move six feet across the ground.
 - c. The sloth's body is about two feet long.
 - d. The life of a sloth is not very exciting.

2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
 - a. Sloths have a round head, small ears and sad-looking eyes.
 - b. The shape of a sloth's mouth makes it look like it is always smiling.
 - c. A sloth can turn its head almost all the way around.
 - d. Sloths are friendly-looking and cute animals.

3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
 - a. Sloths are home to other plants and creatures.
 - b. Tiny plants grow on the sloth's fur.
 - c. The plants that grow on the sloth make the sloth green.
 - d. Moths and insects live in the sloth's fur.

4. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
 - a. Sloths the size of elephants once lived on Earth.
 - b. Today, sloths live in the tropical forests of Central and South America.
 - c. Many tropical forests are disappearing, along with the sloths that live there.
 - d. Sloths are at risk for becoming extinct.

5. In one sentence, what is the main idea of the entire text?



Answers

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - ☒ a. Sloths are the slowest mammals on earth.
 - b. It takes a full minute for a sloth to move six feet across the ground.
 - c. The sloth's body is about two feet long.
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 - c. Many tropical forests are disappearing, along with the sloths that live there.
 - ☒ d. Sloths are at risk for becoming extinct.
5. In one sentence, what is the main idea of the entire text?

Answers will vary but should include a combination of the main ideas from each paragraph.