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This story is about the biggest bird on Earth. Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.



A Really Big Bird

Birds come in many sizes. Some birds are small. Some birds are tall. The biggest bird on Earth is the ostrich. An ostrich can grow to almost eight feet tall and can weigh 300 pounds.

The ostrich cannot fly. But it can run! It has strong legs with only two toes. Its strong legs make the ostrich a good runner. It can run 43 miles per hour for short distances. It can run 30 miles per hour for long distances. An ostrich has feathers like other birds. Its feathers are soft and loose. That makes the ostrich look shaggy. The ostrich uses its short wings to keep its balance when it runs. It also uses its wings to help it change direction when it runs.



Ostriches live on grasslands in Africa. Grasslands have open spaces and only a few trees. Ostriches live in a herd. Some herds are large. They have almost 100 ostriches. But most herds are small. They have about 10 birds. Ostriches eat mostly plants. They also eat some insects and small animals. Ostriches do not have teeth. They swallow sand and small stones when they eat. The stones help them grind up the food in their stomach.

The female ostriches all lay their eggs in one big nest. One female ostrich sits on the nest during the day. One male ostrich sits on the nest at night. The ostrich eggs are about six inches long. They weigh between three and five pounds each. One ostrich egg is equal to about 20 hens' eggs. The largest bird on Earth also lays the largest egg on Earth!



Understanding the Story

It is important to understand what you read. You just read a story about ostriches. Did you read the story carefully?

Here are some questions about the story. Read each one. Then fill in the circle beside the best answer. If you are not sure, go back and look at the story again.

1. An ostrich's wings help the bird to

- (A) keep warm
- (B) fly very high
- (C) hide from other animals
- (D) keep its balance when it runs

Factual

2. How fast can an ostrich run?

- (A) 10 miles per hour
- (B) 30 miles per hour
- (C) 50 miles per hour
- (D) 60 miles per hour

Factual

3. Sand and stones help grind up the ostriches' food because

- (A) ostriches do not have teeth
- (B) ostriches only eat plants
- (C) ostriches can't swallow
- (D) ostriches live in herds

Critical Reasoning

4. What helps the ostrich be a good runner?

- (A) It weighs only 50 pounds.
- (B) Its feathers are waterproof.
- (C) It has strong legs.
- (D) It has a long neck.

Inference

5. *Grasslands* are

- (A) small open areas in a jungle
- (B) areas where only grass can grow
- (C) areas with a lot of trees and grass
- (D) large open areas

Inference

6. An ostrich cannot fly most likely because

- (A) it only has two toes
- (B) it has to sit on the nest
- (C) it is too big and heavy
- (D) it must stay in the herd

Critical Reasoning

SAMPLE



Summing Up



The story told you a lot about ostriches, the largest birds on Earth. Think about what you have read. Write information about the ostrich in the different parts of the circle. Go back to the story for ideas if you need to.



How does it move?

How does it live?

What does it eat?

OSTRICH



Write About It

If you want someone to agree with you, you have to give them good reasons. It helps if you have details to support your reasons.

If you wanted to convince someone that the ostrich is an important bird, you would have to explain why.

The ostrich is the biggest bird in the world.

It can grow to more than 8 feet tall.

Now try using good details in your own writing. Imagine you are trying to convince the local zoo to declare a week to celebrate ostriches. Write an e-mail to the zoo director giving your reasons. Use the information from the circle chart on page 36 to support your idea.

To:	
Subject:	Celebrate Ostriches Week
<p>I think the zoo should have a special week to celebrate ostriches. The ostrich is a very special bird. Here are reasons why I think you should have a special week:</p>	