



This story is about an endangered animal living in the mountains of Asia. Read the story. Then answer the questions that follow.



Snow Leopards

Walking in the snow can be hard work. With each step, you sink deeper. People use snowshoes to help them walk in snow. Some animals that live in the snow have special *adaptations* on their feet to help them. They don't need snowshoes! They are born with features that help them walk and survive in the snow.

Snow leopards live in the snow. These cats live high in the mountains of Central Asia. Their feet are covered with fur even on the bottom. The fur acts as natural snowshoes. They also have thick fur all over their bodies. The snow leopard uses its tail as a blanket, too. It can wrap its long tail around parts of its body that get cold.

The tail is also used to help snow leopards keep their balance on the steep mountain slopes. This helps them hunt in the mountains. Good balance helps snow leopards stay on their feet as they jump and chase prey. They have powerful legs and can jump very far, up to 50 feet. The snow leopards

use this ability to help them catch their prey. They eat deer, boar, and blue sheep. Blue sheep are a type of sheep that live in the mountains in Central Asia. Snow leopards also eat rabbits and birds.

Sometimes snow leopards eat animals like goats and sheep. This makes people angry. Then the goat and sheep herders kill the cats. They want to keep their animals safe. Poachers also kill snow leopards. They sell the pelts even though it is against the law. *Pelt* is another name for the skin and fur of an animal. Some people like to wear the spotted fur. They use pelts to make hats and coats. Snow leopards are also used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Snow leopards are becoming extinct. People move into the cats' *habitats*. The leopards lose their homes. The people take up space. But they also kill other animals the snow leopard uses as food. People hunt blue sheep, rabbits, and birds for food. There are only about 6,000 snow leopards left in the world.





Understanding the Story

It is important to understand what you read. You just read a story about snow leopards. 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. How many snow leopards are left in the world?

- (A) 100
- (B) 600
- (C) 6,000
- (D) 50,000

Factual

2. How does people killing the snow leopards' prey affect the snow leopards?

- (A) Snow leopards are no longer hunted.
- (B) Snow leopards can't find food.
- (C) More snow leopards appear.
- (D) Farmers chase off the snow leopards.

Critical Reasoning

3. What helps snow leopards stay balanced while hunting?

- (A) their tails
- (B) their eyes
- (C) their ears
- (D) their claws

Factual

4. What *adaptations* help snow leopards walk in the snow?

- (A) fur on their feet
- (B) sharp claws
- (C) a long tail
- (D) thick fur

Inference

5. People use the snow leopards' pelts

- (A) to eat
- (B) for a pet
- (C) for shoes
- (D) for coats

Factual

6. A *habitat* is

- (A) something you do many times
- (B) a home
- (C) food
- (D) a newborn snow leopard

Inference

7. Snow leopards can be protected by

- (A) getting rid of their prey
- (B) destroying their habitat
- (C) allowing poachers to hunt
- (D) creating a reserve for snow leopards

**Critical
Reasoning**

8. A snow leopard can jump up to

- (A) 5 feet
- (B) 25 feet
- (C) 50 feet
- (D) 500 feet

Factual



Summing Up

You have learned some things about snow leopards. A **time line** is a special way to show a sequence of events. Look at the time line below and put the following events in order. The first one has been done for you.

There are fewer snow leopards.

People get angry.

Snow leopards eat domestic animals.

Snow leopards are killed.

Herders want to protect their animals.

Snow leopards eat domestic animals.





Write About It

Writing can have many purposes. When you write a letter, you can tell people something you have learned. Write a letter to a friend and tell your friend what you have learned about snow leopards. Tell your friend what snow leopards eat, what special adaptations they have, and why they are endangered.

Dear _____,

Today I learned about snow leopards. Here are some interesting facts I learned. Snow leopards eat _____

Snow leopards live in the snow and they have special adaptations to help them survive. Some of their adaptations are _____

There are not many snow leopards left. They are endangered because

Hopefully, something can be done to help save these animals.

Sincerely yours,
