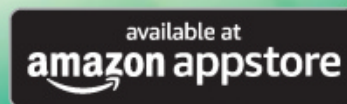
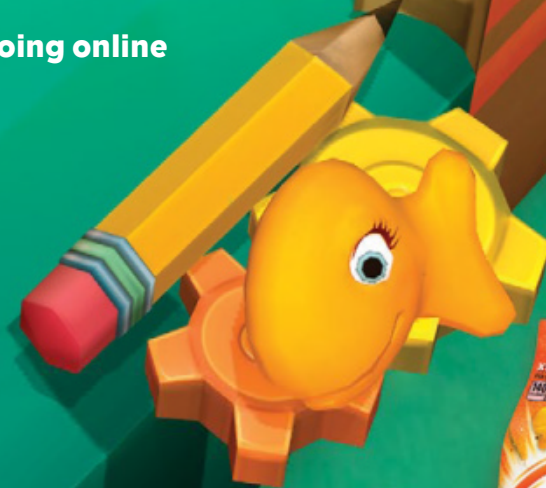


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**weird**  
but  
**true!**

**COOL  
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# 9 Animals

## That Changed the World

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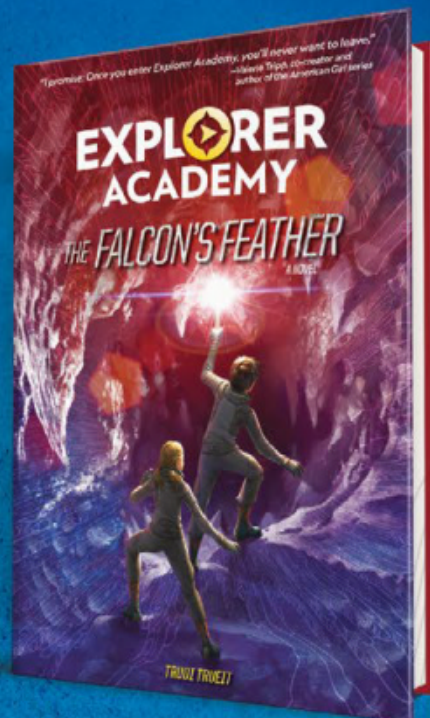
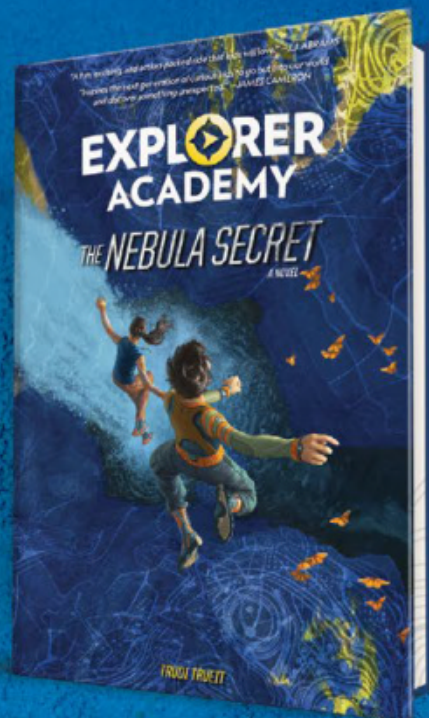
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POSTER!**  
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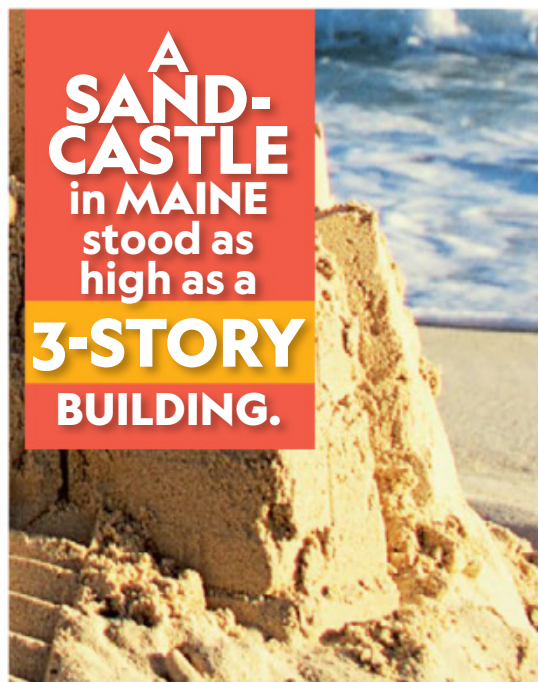
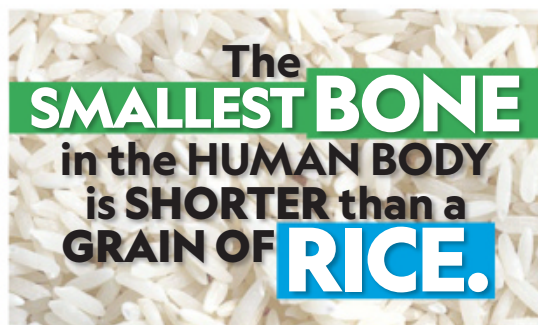
# weird but true!

Check out these  
outrageous facts.

BY MARILYN TERRELL



More than **2 MILLION ANIMALS FLY** in **AIRPLANES** in the United States every year.



Grab a parent to watch  
Fast Facts for even  
more crazy-fun facts.  
[youtube.com/natgeokids](https://www.youtube.com/natgeokids)

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# GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

BY ALLI DICKEY



## SUPER-FAST GOAT

**L**ooking like a white-and-black blur, Ninja the goat ran across the backs of 26 people in just 9.4 seconds to set the record for the fastest goat to climb over a human tunnel. Ninja's not just speedy—he's also flexible. The talented animal is trained in both yoga and acrobatics. Wonder what his backflip looks like.



## DANCING ROBOTS

**R**obots are taking over—the dance floor, that is! In Rome, Italy, 1,372 robots waved their arms and stomped their feet to set the record for the most robots dancing at the same time. The 1.3-foot-tall bots were all controlled by a single smartphone that programmed their moves. The song that got them grooving? “Another Day of Sun” from the movie *La La Land*.



## LONGEST CAKE

**T**alk about a *berry* delicious treat. Pastry chefs in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, France, worked together to create a 105-foot-7-inch French strawberry cake, the world's longest. The dessert was about the length of a blue whale and contained about 440 pounds of strawberries, plus—wait for it—a whopping 59 pounds of sugar!



# ALL ABOUT MONEY

BY KRISTIN BAIRD RATTINI

The **\$20 bill** is the most widely counterfeited note in the United States.



Guatemala's currency is named the **quetzal**, after the national bird.



**King Tut** appears on the Egyptian 1-pound coin.



A janitor at a German library found and turned in a box of rare coins thought to be worth **hundreds of thousands of dollars**.



In India, the slang term for the amount of **100,000 rupees** is **peti**, or **suitcase**. You might need one to carry that much money!



A collection in the Smithsonian Institution has **750,000 pieces** of paper money.



During Chinese New Year, many families make offerings to the Chinese god of wealth, **Cai-Shen**.



**Canadian banknotes** come with raised dot patterns for visually impaired people.



**MONEY TIP!**  
.....  
ANY TIME YOU BUY SOMETHING ON SALE, PUT WHAT YOU SAVED IN YOUR PIGGY BANK.





**Bet You  
Didn't  
Know!**

# 9 marvelous facts about Mars

BY ANDREA SILEN

1

**MARS**  
has **2** small  
**MOONS**.

2

**A YEAR ON  
MARS** lasts  
nearly twice  
as long as one  
on Earth.

3

The  
average  
**TEMPERATURE**  
on Mars is  
**-81°F.**

4

You  
could **JUMP  
3 TIMES  
HIGHER**  
on Mars than  
on Earth.

5

It takes  
**6 to 11  
MONTHS**  
for a spacecraft  
to **TRAVEL**  
from Earth to  
Mars.

7

From  
Mars's  
surface, the  
**SKY** is the  
color of  
**BUTTERSCOTCH.**

6

By the  
**2040s**,  
astronauts  
might **VISIT  
MARS.**

8

One  
**VOLCANO**  
on the planet is  
about **3 TIMES  
TALLER**  
than Mount  
Everest.

9

Mars  
is nicknamed  
**THE RED  
PLANET**  
because it's  
covered in  
**RED DUST.**



**CHECK  
OUT  
THE  
BOOK!**



# BY **the** NUMBERS

## SAHARA STATS

The Sahara, a desert in northern Africa, is one of the driest places on the planet. Slather on some sunscreen and grab a few cool facts about this hot spot.

**TEMPERATURE**  
CAN RISE HIGHER THAN

**122°F**

**SIZE**

**3.47 MILLION**  
**SQUARE MILES**

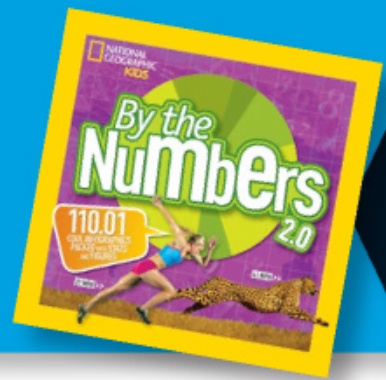
**COVERAGE**

**6%**  
**OF THE**  
**WORLD'S**  
**LAND AREA**

**THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES**  
**WOULD FIT INSIDE THE SAHARA**  
**WITH ROOM TO SPARE.**







CHECK  
OUT THE  
BOOK!

BY JEN ADRION

## LOCATION

COVERS MOST OF NORTH AFRICA, SPREADING ACROSS

# 11 AFRICAN COUNTRIES:

LIBYA, ALGERIA, EGYPT, TUNISIA,  
CHAD, MOROCCO, ERITREA, NIGER,  
MAURITANIA, MALI, AND SUDAN



## RAINFALL

LESS THAN

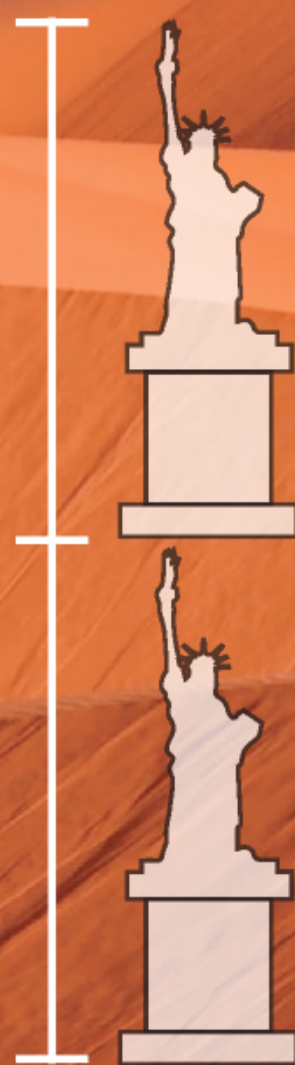
# 3 INCHES

A YEAR

## HEIGHT

SAND DUNES CAN  
RISE AS HIGH AS

# 600 FEET.



THAT'S AS TALL AS  
**2 STATUES OF LIBERTY**  
STACKED ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.



# AMAZING ANIMALS

I JUST WANTED TO TAKE A CRUISE.



## Orca Steals Boat

### Vancouver Island, Canada

As onlookers watched an unmanned sailboat glide around the harbor, they wondered if ghosts were steering the ship. But it wasn't a supernatural force: It was a super-sneaky orca. The killer whale—known as T073B to scientists—was pulling the boat by swimming with the anchor rope in its mouth.

Orca researcher Josh McInnes says his team of scientists has often spotted T073B playing with crab traps and buoys, so they figured the whale was probably investigating the rope when he started pulling the sailboat. "Top predators like orcas are curious because they have to explore their environment in search of prey," McInnes says.

T073B played with the boat for about five minutes before releasing the rope and then leaping out of the water. Although the orca caused some damage to the vessel, the owners didn't mind. "When we're on our boat in the ocean, we're in the orcas' home," owner Kendra Campbell says. Maybe they should rename this whale Captain Orca. —Elizabeth Hilfrank

You'd need more than 650 cans of tuna each day to keep an orca full.

UNMANNED SAILBOAT

ORCA

THE ORCA DRAGGED THE 27-FOOT-LONG SAILBOAT IN CIRCLES, SIDESWIPING ANOTHER VESSEL.





# Cat Takes Trip

## Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

When Gracie Mae the cat spotted an open suitcase, she did what many cats do: She hopped inside and burrowed under the clothes. Not realizing she was inside, owner Seth Levy closed the suitcase and headed to the airport. That's when Gracie Mae's adventure began. Still in the suitcase, the cat went through an x-ray machine and into the plane. She flew from Florida to Dallas, Texas, then shot down the ramp into baggage claim, where the wrong passenger picked up the suitcase. Finally, nine and a half hours later, a hungry, cranky Gracie Mae stepped out—to the surprise of the other passenger, who quickly called Levy's wife, Kelly. "She was back to her affectionate self the next day," she says. After that trip, Gracie Mae needed a *stay-cation*!

—Heather E. Schwartz

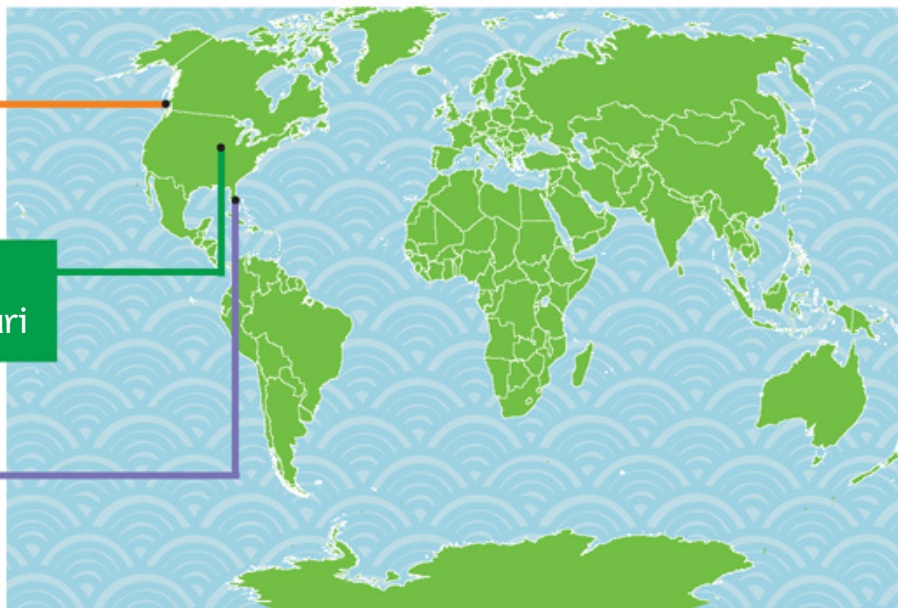
AT LEAST  
THE CLOTHES  
IN THE  
SUITCASE  
WERE CLEAN.



**ORCA**  
Vancouver  
Island,  
Canada

**BEAR**  
St. Louis, Missouri

**CAT**  
Palm Beach  
Gardens,  
Florida



SUN'S  
OUT,  
TONGUE'S  
OUT!



# Bear Has Giant Tongue

## St. Louis, Missouri

Rimba the sun bear reveals a shocking secret when he opens his mouth at the St. Louis Zoo. It's not bad breath—it's a foot-long tongue.

Rimba darts his tongue into logs to search for food. "We drill holes in tree logs and hide things like peanut butter and raisins," mammal curator Steve Bircher says.

Rimba might look a little unusual, but in the wild, sun bears need their long tongues to survive. Unlike other bears, which spend most of their time on the ground, sun bears hang out in trees. They cling to branches with their paws, and they use their tongues to lap up insects and honey.

You'd think such a long tongue might trip up Rimba, but he's actually quite graceful. At least the bear isn't tongue-tied!

—Madaline Donnelly



# Animals That Changed the World

BY BRENNAL MALONEY



CHRIS P. BACON

WATCH CHRIS P. BACON IN ACTION.  
[natgeokids.com/may](http://natgeokids.com/may)



1

# PIG GETS WHEELS

## SUMTERVILLE, FLORIDA

Chris P. Bacon just wanted to run and play. But he was born without the use of his back legs. Luckily the piglet was adopted by veterinarian Len Lucero, who built him a different pair of “legs.” He attached a wheeled cart behind Chris so the pig could pull himself along, sort of like a miniature pig-mobile. Lucero was so impressed with Chris’ spirit that the vet started bringing the pig to visit children in hospitals, hoping that he’d inspire them as well. This pig is really on a roll!

VETERINARIAN LEN LUCERO BOTTLE-FEEDS HIS ADOPTED PIG, CHRIS P. BACON.



# TORTOISE LIVES (ALMOST) FOREVER

2

## GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS, OFF THE COAST OF ECUADOR

Up until 1971, scientists thought that Pinta Island tortoises were extinct. Then a scientist studying snails in the Galápagos Islands wandered upon one! Dubbed Lonesome George, the tortoise became a conservation hero, reminding people that all species need protection. Until his death at about a hundred years old in 2012, Lonesome George lived on Santa Cruz Island in the Galápagos, where he helped scientists make another startling discovery: At least 17 tortoises on the Galápagos Islands have similar genetic traits to George—and might even be related. Turns out George might not have been the last of his kind after all.

GEORGE WAS ABOUT FIVE FEET LONG AND WEIGHED NEARLY 200 POUNDS.



TOM BENITEZ / ORLANDO SENTINEL / MCT / NEWS.COM (CHRIS P. BACON, BOTH); TUI DE ROY / MIN-DEN PICTURES (LONESOME GEORGE, TOP); ARTURO DE FRIAS / ALAMY (LONESOME GEORGE, BOTTOM)





3

FRED

## CAT WORKS UNDERCOVER

### BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Fred the cat didn't get off to a great start. Stricken with pneumonia, the four-month-old kitten was wandering alone on the streets before being adopted. But his new owner gave Fred more than a home. She gave him a purpose that would help save other animals. Hearing about a man suspected of illegally treating sick animals without proper training, Fred's owner—whose job it was to oversee animal cruelty cases for the city—had a clever idea. She would send in Fred undercover, posing as a patient. Working with a human detective, Fred became the “bait” so the fake vet could be stopped. Looks like Fred put a halt to the *purr*-fect crime.

FRED THE CAT RECEIVED AN AWARD FOR HELPING BUST A PHONY VET.



## HIPPO GOES ON SAFARI

4

### SOUTH AFRICA

People in the 1930s needed hope. Extreme financial hardship, called a depression, had affected most of the world, including South Africa. So what gave people inspiration? A hippo! Huberta left her watering hole one day in 1928 and just kept walking for the next three years. As she passed through villages and by surprised farmers working in fields, Huberta's adventures became famous. Nothing seemed to slow down the hippo, and she ended up walking more than a thousand miles before finally taking a break. The unstoppable Huberta inspired people to keep moving forward, even as they faced hard times. Wonder what was next for Huberta ... a Caribbean beach walk?





# BEAR FIGHTS FOREST FIRES

5

## LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST, NEW MEXICO

Firefighters were struggling to control two dangerous wildfires in May 1950 when a 70-mile-an-hour wind swept the flames into the heroes' path. Thinking quickly, they lay facedown on a rockslide and waited for the fire to roar past them. The men survived—but a black bear cub found nearby was in trouble. Clinging to the side of a charred pine tree, the cub's paws were badly burned. Firefighters rescued the bear and treated his injuries, and the cub, named Smokey, made a full recovery. Soon this brave survivor became the fire-safety mascot known as Smokey Bear for the U.S. Forest Service. Today, a cartoon version of

Smokey Bear continues to inspire kids and adults to help prevent forest fires in the United States.



SMOKEY BEAR HAS SERVED AS THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE'S FIRE-SAFETY MASCOT FOR NEARLY 70 YEARS.



SMOKEY

# DOGS BATTLE WILDLIFE CRIME

6

## KENYA AND TANZANIA, IN AFRICA

Some dogs sniff out their food; Bonnie, Clyde, and Didi sniff out bad guys. Trained by Big Life Foundation, a conservation group working in East Africa, the dogs sniff out poachers who hunt protected animals such as elephants and rhinoceroses. With their powerful noses, the dogs have led handlers straight to criminals' doors and even sniffed out weapons and traps, saving countless animals. In fact, the dogs are so good at their job that conservation workers have actually seen a drop in the number of area poachers. Hope these pooches are being rewarded with lots of toys!



BONNIE

DIDI

CLYDE





**BUTTERCUP**

THREE-TOED SLOTHS LIKE BUTTERCUP CAN ROTATE THEIR HEADS UP TO 300 DEGREES.

## SLOTH OPENS SANCTUARY

**7**

### CAHUITA, COSTA RICA

Judy Avey-Arroyo didn't quite know what to do when three girls showed up with an orphaned baby sloth wrapped in a blanket. She and her husband ran a small hotel and didn't know anything about sloths. But she couldn't turn away the animal, which she named Buttercup. Finding little advice from experts, Avey-Arroyo let Buttercup teach *her* what the sloth needed to grow into a healthy youngster. Soon more orphaned sloths started showing up at Avey-Arroyo's door, and she eventually opened the Sloth Sanctuary. Thanks to Buttercup's lessons, Avey-Arroyo has helped many sloths live better lives—even if most of their lives are spent sleeping.



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**/may**



8

# BIRD GETS NEW BEAK



AFTER

BEAUTY

## COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

When Beauty the bald eagle was found in the Alaskan mountains after a stray bullet shattered her beak, rescuers from Idaho's Birds of Prey Northwest rushed to save her. Rehabilitators helped her get stronger, but after a few months she still couldn't eat or drink without help. But then an engineer came up with a crazy idea: they would make Beauty a new beak, built from a 3-D printer. It worked! Over time, her beak began regrowing so that she needed her new beak less and less. And now Beauty has inspired scientists and rescuers to use this technology on other injured animals. It's like a fairy tale: "Beauty and the Beak."



BEFORE

# PANDAS BECOME PEACE- MAKERS

9

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

It was *panda-monium* when two giant pandas arrived in the United States as a goodwill gift from China in 1972. Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing drew more than 20,000 visitors on their very first day at the National Zoo, which soon became a leader in panda conservation. Zookeepers learned much about the species, which they shared with other institutions to help protect all giant pandas. But the gift didn't help just pandas—it helped the two countries become better friends.

LING-LING  
(LEFT) AND  
HSING-HSING  
PLAY TOGETHER  
AT THE  
NATIONAL ZOO.



LING-LING

HSING-HSING

GET MORE AWESOME ANIMALS!  
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A gray seal can curl its flippers to tear food or grasp land.

These sea mammals can swim 20 miles





an hour in short bursts.

Native to the North Atlantic Ocean, gray seals see and hear better underwater.



# What Your Dreams Might Say About You

**Your brain could be telling you something.**

BY SARAH WASSNER FLYNN  
ART BY BLAKE THORNTON

How many times have you told someone, “I had the weirdest dream last night”? Probably a lot. In fact, you can have up to six dreams a night. Some of them are bound to be crazy.

Dreams are created by the part of your brain that stores memories, emotions, and thoughts. At night your brain blends what’s stored in your mind with what you’ve been thinking about lately. The result can be wild but realistic dreams.

Dreams hardly ever become reality, but they might contain hints about what’s going on in your life. “Dreams help us get in touch with our deeper feelings,” dream researcher Alan Siegel says. “They can tell us a lot about ourselves and could even help us figure out problems.”

Scientists have discovered that many dreams contain common themes that have meaning. Here are nine types of dreams that could tell you a lot about yourself—and what might be happening in your life.



**THE THEME** Being chased

**SAMPLE DREAM** Maybe it’s a hairy, scary monster or a gigantic, shapeless blob—or both. Whatever it is, you just can’t shake these guys.

**WHAT IT MEANS** The scary thing that’s chasing you around is probably a symbol of a real-life problem you don’t want to deal with. But this dream is telling you it’s time to stop running from the problem and start facing it.

You’ll spend about six years of your life dreaming.





**THE THEME** Showing up in pajamas

**SAMPLE DREAM** As you run onto the soccer field, you realize that instead of a uniform, you're wearing—yikes!—fuzzy footie pajamas. (Or worse ... you're naked.)

**WHAT IT MEANS** Your brain might be helping you recover from a real-life embarrassing moment. If no one's making a big deal about the dream pj's, chances are your friends think you're cool no matter what. If they *are* laughing? It could be time for some new friends!



Your brain waves are more active when you're dreaming than when you're awake.



**THE THEME** Not being able to move

**SAMPLE DREAM** An angry elephant is charging you, but it's as if your feet are superglued to the ground. You try to scream, but you have no voice.

**WHAT IT MEANS** You're probably feeling "stuck" in life. (Maybe your parents just grounded you.) You need to think about how you got into this sticky situation, then try to make smarter choices in the future.

A dream usually lasts from 10 to 40 minutes.

**THE THEME** Falling

**SAMPLE DREAM** You're climbing Mount Everest when you lose your grip. You fall and fall and fall ... until you gently land in a bed of daisies.

**WHAT IT MEANS** You might have too much going on. It's time to slow down and take a break from whatever is stressing you out. And the soft landing? It could be a sign that you'll soon get through this tough time.



KEEP TRACK OF YOUR DREAMS—CHECK OUT THE BOOK!



**THE THEME** Losing something

**SAMPLE DREAM** Your Selena Gomez concert tickets are nowhere to be found. You've torn your room apart but can't find them anywhere.

**WHAT IT MEANS** You might be looking for an ego boost. Perhaps you want to try out a new sport or hobby, and you're not sure if you can do it. Search deep inside yourself for that confidence. It's there—you just have to find it!



**THE THEME** Hanging with a celeb

**SAMPLE DREAM** You totally hit it off with Taylor Swift. She even asks you to play keyboard on her next single.

**WHAT IT MEANS** Celebrities in dreams usually represent good feelings you have about yourself. Perhaps you just aced a test or landed the lead in your school play. Things are going awesome for you—congrats!



Girls dream about girls and guys equally. Guys tend to dream more about other guys.

**THE THEME** Flying

**SAMPLE DREAM** You're walking down the street when all of a sudden you start to fly.

**WHAT IT MEANS** It's likely you're flying high in real life as well. Maybe your friends see you as a leader, or your parents have given you more freedom.



**THE THEME** Being lost

**SAMPLE DREAM** The normal path from home to school becomes a maze of twists and turns. Where are you?

**WHAT IT MEANS** You're probably feeling a little lost in life. Are you facing a tough decision? You might be afraid of making the wrong choice. Think carefully about your options to find your way out of this situation.



One study found that the longer you sleep, the stranger your dreams become.



**THE THEME** Being unprepared or late

**SAMPLE DREAM** Uh-oh! Your teacher just passed out a major test, and you don't know any of the answers. Or worse—you show up *after* the test is over.

**WHAT IT MEANS** You're worrying big-time about an upcoming event or project. If you're prepared, it's just a sign that you're nervous. That's normal. But if you've been slacking, take this dream as a hint and get to work!

Zzzzz!



CUTE KITTEN

## Do Animals Dream?

A sleeping puppy's nose wiggles, its paws twitch, and it softly woofs—the pup must be dreaming, right?

Scientists aren't so sure. "It's one of the greatest mysteries in biology," sleep expert Marcos Frank says.

To find out, researchers

looked at the brain waves of animals while asleep and awake. In one experiment, birds called zebra finches seemed to show the same brain activity while sleeping that they had while they were awake and singing. In another study, the brain



# Moment of Snooze ...

We made up some silly dreams that these animals might be having.

ALL  
THE OTHER  
RED PANDAS  
WILL BE SO  
JEALOUS OF  
MY NEW  
BLANKET.

SEAL



MMM ...  
BAMBOO  
SMOOTHIES ...

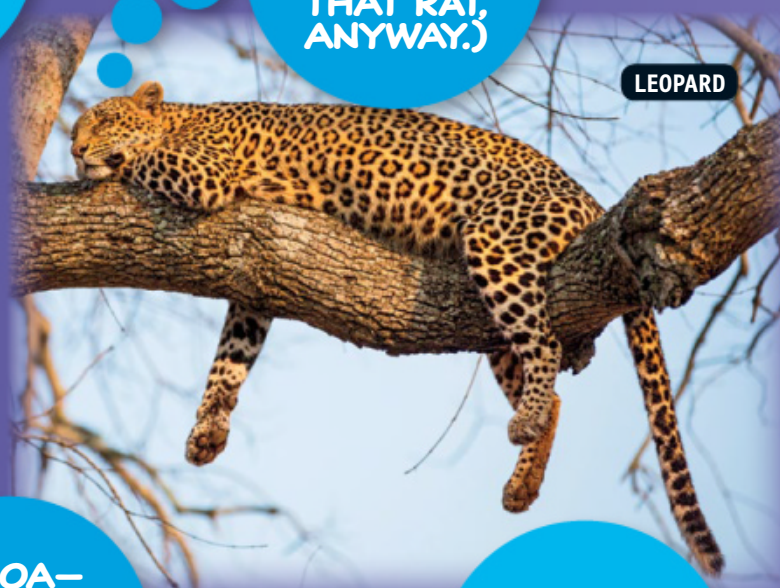
WHEE! I'M  
SPINNING  
LIKE A  
DOLPHIN!

RED PANDA



HE SHOOTS,  
HE SCORES!  
(SCORED  
THAT RAT,  
ANYWAY.)

LEOPARD



GIANT  
PANDA



WHOA—  
WHAT'S UP  
WITH MY  
NEW PURPLE  
FUR?

I WON  
THE LOTTERY!  
FREE SALMON  
FOR LIFE!

TIGER



BROWN BEAR



GET MORE **MOMENT OF SNOOZE.**  
[natgeokids.com/may](http://natgeokids.com/may)

patterns of snoozing lab rats appeared to be running the maze that they'd moved through earlier that day—almost as if they were practicing in their sleep. “This strongly suggests that they’re dreaming about what they did while they

were awake,” Frank says.

But it’s hard to say if animals have fantastical dreams like we do. Humans understand that they’re dreaming when they wake up and remember who they are—not, say, a famous astronaut on a planet made

of chocolate pudding. But Frank says that most animals might not have that kind of awareness about themselves.

Which means that you’re probably dreaming if you think that elephants tap dance in their sleep.

YOUNG ZEBRA FINCH





# WILD SUPERHERO

Meet three superheroes  
inspired by real-life creatures.

BY JAMIE KIFFEL-ALCHEH

Superheroes can swing from skyscrapers, leap crazy high, and zoom through the sky. But some animals can too. Check out how these three superheroes stack up to the real-life creatures they're named after.



PERSONALITY QUIZ: WHAT SUPERPOWER  
SHOULD YOU HAVE? [natgeokids.com/may](https://www.natgeokids.com/may)

## SUPERHERO: SPIDER-MAN

**ANIMAL INSPIRATION:** Spiders

**SHARED POWERS:** Spider-Man and real arachnids both release spider silk strong enough to suspend them in the air. And both can shoot different types of webbing: Spider-Man uses one kind of silk to trap villains and another to swing from buildings; some real spiders can produce up to seven different types of webbing, including one for making egg sacs.

**BIG-SCREEN BOOST:** Spider-Man uses his superhuman strength to lift a collapsed building. Most real spiders can't carry objects bigger than they are. But scientists have noted one possible exception: Jumping spiders might be able to carry 170 times their body weight. That's like a 10-year-old carrying an orca!



ORB-WEAVER  
SPIDER

REAL SPIDER  
SILK IS 20  
TIMES TOUGHER  
THAN STEEL.



# HEROES



BLACK LEOPARDS STILL HAVE SPOTS—THEY'RE JUST HARDER TO SEE ON THEIR DARK COATS.



BLACK LEOPARD

## SUPERHERO: BLACK PANTHER

**ANIMAL INSPIRATION:** Leopards (“Black panther” can describe many wild cats with black coats, but it’s most commonly applied to leopards.)

**SHARED POWERS:** Black Panther can run up to 70 miles an hour, almost as fast as the average speed of a passenger train. Real-life leopards can run fast, but they’re not quite as speedy as the superhero. These cats have been clocked sprinting at up to 40 miles an hour.

**BIG-SCREEN BOOST:** Black Panther’s suit absorbs energy, then releases it with just as much force. So if the superhero takes a hit, he absorbs the energy from the punch and uses it to strike back harder. Real leopards don’t have super-suits, but they can use built-up energy to attack prey. When they crouch to leap, they build up energy that helps them launch themselves up to 10 feet in the air. (Picture holding down a coil and releasing it.) Talk about making the fur fly.

## SUPERHERO: THE WASP

**ANIMAL INSPIRATION:** Wasps

**SHARED POWERS:** The insect-inspired superhero and real wasps can deliver painful stings, though the Wasp doesn’t have an actual stinger. She harnesses her body to fire blasts of energy to “sting” villains. Wasps, of course, have actual stingers—at least, the females do. The insects keep their stingers covered until they’re threatened. Then they coat their barbless stingers in venom before piercing their victim.

**BIG-SCREEN BOOST:** The Wasp can shrink down to an insect’s size to escape danger. Real wasps can’t shrink, but they still have slick tricks. For example, their powerful jaws can break up the bodies of their prey for smaller, uh, portion sizes. Tiny can be tough.

WASPS CAN CHEW THROUGH WOOD IN MINUTES.



MARVEL STUDIOS / TCD / PROD.DB / ALAMY (CAPTAIN MARVEL); JUERGEN & CHRISTINE SOHNS / GETTY IMAGES (ECHIDNA); CLAY ENOS / WARNER BROS. / COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION (WONDER WOMAN); MILES AWAY PHOTOGRAPHY / SHUTTERSTOCK (BARN OWL); MONTY BRINTON / CBS / GETTY IMAGES (SUPERGIRL); STEPHEN DALTON / MINDEN PICTURES (WALLACE'S FLYING FROG)

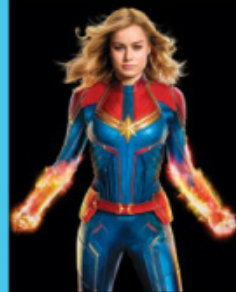
## ANIMAL ALTER EGOS

These superheroes weren’t inspired by animals—but we matched their standout powers to a creature anyway.

### CAPTAIN MARVEL

» Carol Danvers, aka Captain Marvel, gets her super-strength by sensing and absorbing energy from her surroundings. Then she uses her hands to hurl blasts at bad guys. Nice to *heat* you!

**ANIMAL MATCH** Echidnas can also sense energy in their surroundings—they just use it to find food instead of fight crime. The egg-laying mammals use structures called electroreceptors in their snouts to sniff out electrical pulses given off by prey.



ECHIDNA

### WONDER WOMAN

» Besides wielding a lasso that makes trapped villains tell the truth, Wonder Woman can understand and speak any language she hears. That’s handy for eavesdropping.

**ANIMAL MATCH** Barn owls also eavesdrop with their superpowered listening skills. The feathered fliers’ excellent hearing allows them to successfully hunt even in total darkness.



BARN OWL

### SUPERGIRL

» Kara Zor-El gets her powers—like flying—from her ability to absorb radiation from the sun. It runs in the family: She’s Superman’s cousin, after all.

**ANIMAL MATCH** Wallace’s flying frogs also benefit from solar power. Unlike warm-blooded animals, these cold-blooded amphibians can’t make their own body heat, so they rely on the sun for warmth. As for the “flying” part, loose flaps on their limbs help them glide through the air.



WALLACE'S FLYING FROG



# WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

**Find out what would go down if these crazy scenarios actually came true.**

BY CRISPIN BOYER • ART BY JOE ROCCO

## What if Neanderthals never went extinct?

Neanderthals—a type of early human that lived between 40,000 and 400,000 years ago—disappeared some 10,000 years after modern humans appeared. Competition between the two species was likely a factor, but what if Neanderthals had survived long enough to trade in their cave dwellings for houses? These guys didn't react well to change, so they'd probably find it hard to fit in and would find today's technology such as smartphones and social media difficult to master. And since animals aren't as plentiful, Neanderthals couldn't be picky eaters and would need to add more plants to their plates. They'd be more likely to live in remote, cold areas of the world because their stockier bodies were better suited for life in an Ice Age environment. It's unlikely you'd ever see a Neanderthal sunbathing!



## What if you were the first person to land on Mars?

With crewed missions to Mars planned by the 2040s, the first person to step foot on the planet is probably already on Earth—maybe it's you! After a six-month space flight, you'd depart your craft to visit some must-see Mars attractions. Olympus Mons, the tallest volcano in the entire solar system, is about three times taller than Mount Everest. Trekking up its slope would be easy in gravity that's only one-third of Earth's. Or you might check out the Hale crater. Astronomers recently discovered evidence of salt water trickling down its walls. You'd help figure out if the water might've once contained alien microorganisms.







CHECK  
OUT  
THE  
BOOK!

## What if the sun suddenly disappeared?

Light from the sun takes about eight minutes to reach Earth. So if the sun winked out of existence, its final rays would reach us in eight minutes. Then, darkness. The moon would go black once sunlight stopped reflecting off its surface, and the only light on Earth would be starlight and artificial light—electric light, gaslight, and campfires. To survive the below-freezing temperatures, humans would need to move their cities deep underground near the Earth's internal heat, or geothermal energy. Luckily the sun disappearing is impossible. But its core *will* run out of hydrogen fuel ... in about a billion years.



## What if the internet was never invented?

Bye-bye, Wi-Fi. Forget texting your friends. If you want to connect without the internet, you'll need to talk on the phone or write a letter. A world without the web wouldn't necessarily have to feel disconnected though. In the early 2000s, people in Cuba shared movies and music through a network of portable hard drives passed from person to person, a semi-low-tech way of connecting without going online. But no internet would mean a big change in getting homework done. You'd need to go to the library or look things up in a printed encyclopedia. Get ready to study like it's 1989.



## What if Columbus never landed in the Americas?

Christopher Columbus didn't "discover" the New World. People already lived there, after all. But Columbus, exploring on behalf of Spain, *was* one of the first Europeans to set foot in the Americas. So what would the world be like if he hadn't set sail in 1492? Well, eight years after Columbus began his voyage, a Portuguese explorer named Pedro Álvares Cabral made landfall in Brazil and claimed it for Portugal, one of the most powerful countries in the world at the time. So even if Columbus hadn't landed in the Americas, the New World wouldn't have remained unexplored for long. But with a different country leading the way, today's maps and history books could look a lot different.



## EXPLORER ACADEMY

TEXT AND CODE BY GARETH MOORE

### THE CODE: HAND SIGNAL

In the new book *Explorer Academy: The Falcon's Feather*, 12-year-old Cruz Coronado attends an exclusive school to learn how to be an explorer. While at the Academy, he and his friends send each other secret messages by using codes, like these hand signals. In this code, each finger represents a different group of letters.

Check out the letters on the illustration to the right. Tap a finger once to signal the first (top) letter in a group, twice for the second letter, three times for the third, and so on.

### TRY THIS!

To say HEY, you'd tap your index finger three times, your thumb five times, and your little finger five times. To indicate you're starting a new word, you can take a longer pause, move your hand slightly, or switch hands.

### CRACK THIS CODE!

While sitting in the library at the Academy, Cruz spots classmate Bryndis Jónsdóttir tapping her fingers on a table. Could she be sending him a secret warning? Unlock her message with these written finger taps.

ANSWER ON PAGE 35



Ring finger: five taps  
Index finger: three taps  
Thumb: five taps



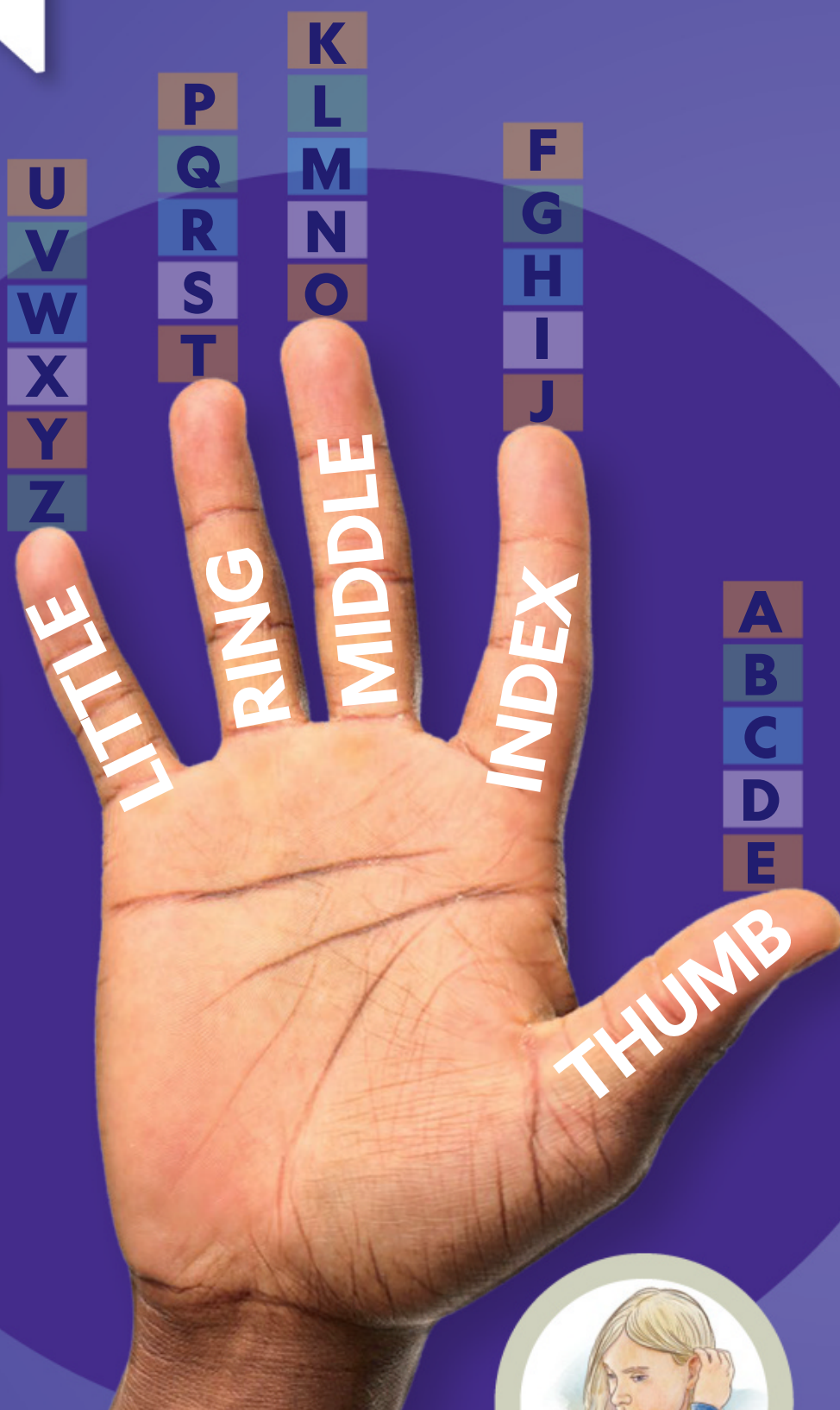
Ring finger: four taps  
Index finger: one tap  
Little finger: five taps



Index finger: four taps  
Ring finger: four taps



Middle finger: four taps  
Thumb: five taps  
Thumb: one tap  
Ring finger: three taps



BRYNDIS JÓNSDÓTTIR





Follow Cruz's  
adventure  
and **CRACK  
MORE CODES**  
in this book.



TECH LAB CHIEF DR.  
FANCHON QUILLS  
(RIGHT) SHOWS  
EMMETT LU (LEFT)  
AND CRUZ ONE OF  
HER EXPERIMENTS.

LEARN MORE ABOUT EXPLORER ACADEMY.  
[ExplorerAcademy.com](http://ExplorerAcademy.com)



# WHAT IN THE WORLD?

CHECK OUT  
THE BOOK!



## AWESOME OVALS

These photographs show views of oval shapes you may recognize. Unscramble the letters to identify what's in each picture.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 35



Y L E L J N E B A

\_\_\_\_\_



D W N W O I

\_\_\_\_\_



I H F S

\_\_\_\_\_



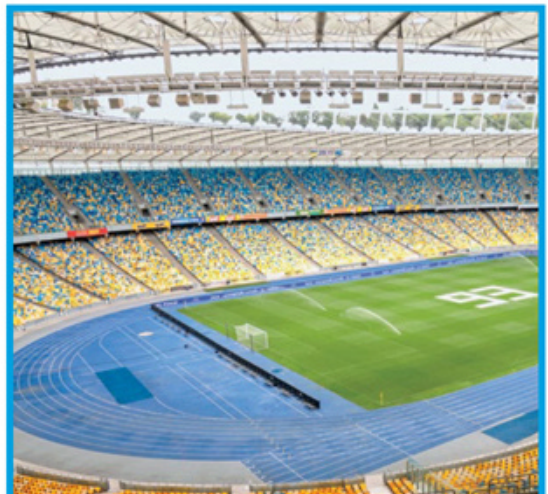
P M L B I

\_\_\_\_\_



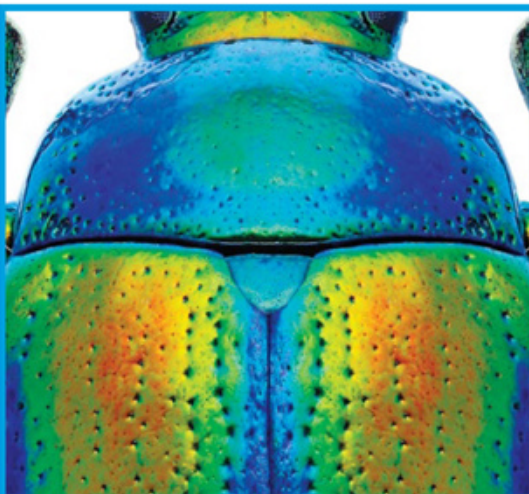
A S C ' T Y E E

\_\_\_\_\_



U M I T S D A

\_\_\_\_\_



E T E B L E

\_\_\_\_\_



A L O P

\_\_\_\_\_



W I I K I R T F U

\_\_\_\_\_

TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): ANDREW BURGESS / SHUTTERSTOCK; INGRAM PUBLISHING / AGE FOTOSTOCK; GAID KORNILAPA / SHUTTERSTOCK. MIDDLE ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): TONYZ20 / SHUTTERSTOCK; PURESTOCK; JUPITERIMAGES; KRYSJA / SHUTTERSTOCK. BOTTOM ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): ALSUTSKY / SHUTTERSTOCK; ALEXANDER HOFFMAN / SHUTTERSTOCK; SIMPLE STOCK SHOTS.



# FUNNY FILL-IN

## FARM FRENZY

Ask a friend to give you words to fill in the blanks in this story without showing it to him or her. Then read out loud for a laugh.

BY MARGARET J. KRAUSS

PLAY MORE FUNNY FILL-IN!

[natgeokids.com/ffi](http://natgeokids.com/ffi)



At \_\_\_\_\_ a.m., my family and I piled into the car for our annual camping trip. We were singing along to \_\_\_\_\_ when we heard a(n) \_\_\_\_\_. Our car had a flat \_\_\_\_\_! Soon a pickup truck pulled over. "I'm Farmer \_\_\_\_\_. Can I offer y'all a ride?" the driver asked. That's how we spent the day on a \_\_\_\_\_ farm. I sat on a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ next to the farmer to learn to milk a cow. But the cow started \_\_\_\_\_ my hair. So instead, I tried to run the \_\_\_\_\_ milk machine. As I pulled a lever, my \_\_\_\_\_ disconnected a tube, and \_\_\_\_\_ started \_\_\_\_\_ everywhere. I \_\_\_\_\_ from the machine, right into a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ pile of \_\_\_\_\_. A bunch of \_\_\_\_\_ ran to lap up the spill, so I \_\_\_\_\_ toward the door. On the way I slipped and fell into the \_\_\_\_\_ pen. I hope our next vacation is a little less exciting.





# STUMP YOUR PARENTS

If your parents can't answer these questions,  
maybe *they* should go to school instead of you!

ANSWERS ON PAGE 35

1

Niagara Falls is made up of three waterfalls:  
the American Falls, Horseshoe Falls, and  
\_\_\_\_\_ Falls.

- A. Wedding Gown    C. Pocket Watch  
B. Bridal Veil    D. Running Shoe

?



2

The ancient Greek god Zeus  
is most often shown with  
what weapon?

- A. a spear    C. a shield  
B. a fireball    D. a thunderbolt

3

The Aztec people, who lived in central  
Mexico during the 15th and 16th  
centuries, used popcorn as  
food and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. jewelry  
B. ammunition  
C. building material  
D. sports equipment



4

The Washington Monument in  
Washington, D.C., was built in two phases:  
1848 to 1856 and 1876 to 1884. Which was  
*not* a reason for the break?

- A. lack of money    C. shortage of white rocks  
B. the Civil War    D. uncertainty that the U.S. government would last



5

What color carnation  
is the national flower  
of Spain?

- A. white    C. pink  
B. red    D. blue



6

Each November, macaques get a special  
feast in their honor in which country?

- A. Chile    C. Japan  
B. Thailand    D. Iceland

7

In which of the world's oceans can  
you find sharks?

- A. Atlantic    C. Arctic  
B. Pacific    D. all of them



8

In which country are over 800  
indigenous languages spoken,  
more than in any other country?

- A. Papua New Guinea    C. Sudan  
B. Norway    D. China

9

Which animal would you *not* find in  
Alaska's Denali National Park?

- A. jackrabbit    C. caribou  
B. Dall sheep    D. grizzly bear

## BEE A GEO-GENIUS!

Watch kid geography whizzes compete in the  
National Geographic GeoBee, then watch some  
super science come to life in the National  
Geographic GeoChallenge. Both will stream online  
starting May 22.

Learn more!

[natgeoed.org/experiences](https://natgeoed.org/experiences)



## PLANET-FRIENDLY ICE POPS

Help keep the Earth healthy by ditching single-use plastic items. This month, make your own ice pops so you can skip the plastic-wrapped store-bought version. Left in outdoor trash cans, these wrappers can easily be blown into the environment, where animals might mistake them for food.

### MATERIALS

- 2 cups of fresh fruit like strawberries, blueberries, peaches, and bananas
- 2 tablespoons honey
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup juice or water
- Blender
- 8 small paper cups
- Baking tin (optional)
- Aluminum foil or 8 foil muffin cups
- 8 wooden craft sticks



### STEPS

1

Grab a parent and put the fruit, honey, and juice (or water) into the blender.



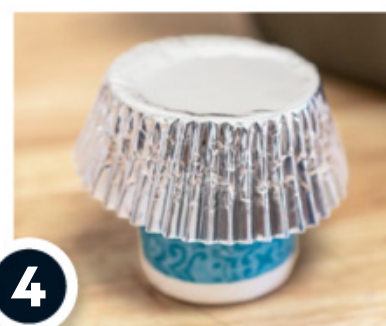
2

Put the lid on the blender, then blend the mixture until it's smooth.



3

Fill the paper cups  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with the blended mixture. (You can put the cups in a baking tin to keep them stable while you pour.)



4

Cover the top of each paper cup with a piece of aluminum foil or a foil muffin cup.



5

Carefully poke a craft stick through the center of the foil on each cup.



6

Slide each craft stick about halfway down into the mixture.



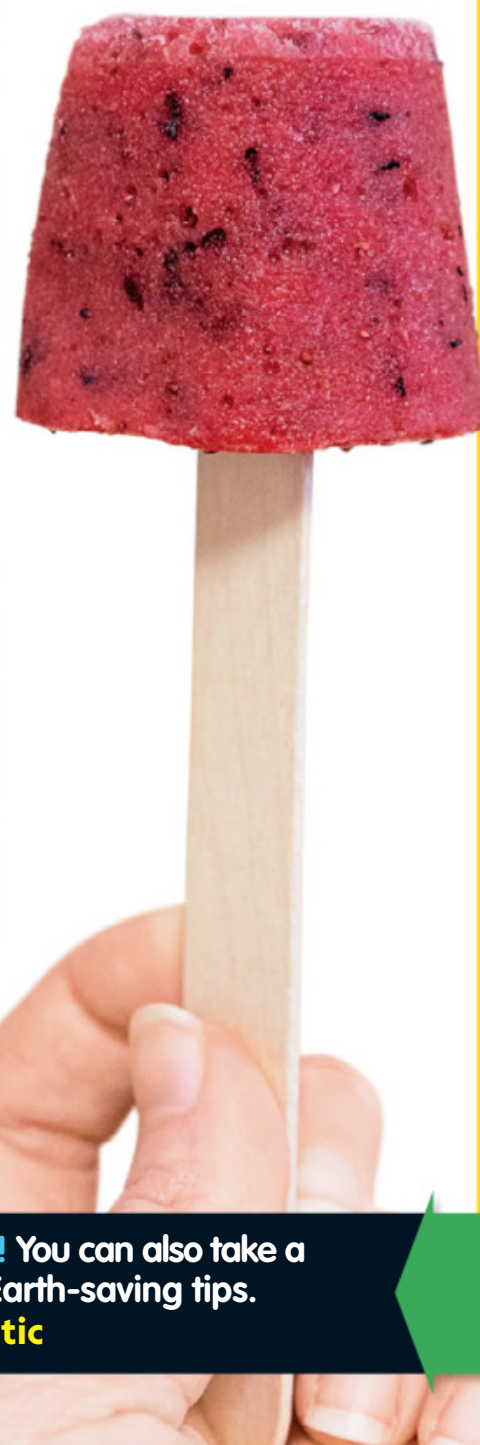
7

Place the cups on a flat surface in the freezer for about four hours, or until the mixture is fully frozen.



8

Take the cups out of the freezer, remove the foil, peel away the paper cups, and enjoy!



### PLANET PROTECTOR TIP

You can reuse the wooden craft sticks next time you make these treats.

**WATCH A STEP-BY-STEP VIDEO ON DIY ICE POPS!** You can also take a Planet Protector pledge and get tons more Earth-saving tips.  
[natgeokids.com/KidsVsPlastic](http://natgeokids.com/KidsVsPlastic)



# CRITTER CHAT

If animals used social media, what would they say? Follow this ring-tailed lemur's day as it updates its feed. BY ALLYSON SHAW

LEMURS ARE THE BEST LEAPERS.

## Ring-Tailed Lemur

LIVES IN: Southern Madagascar

SCREEN NAME: TallTails

FRIENDS: 🐵



LABORD'S CHAMELEON



ColorChange

FOSSA



TopClaw

MADAGASCAR HISSING COCKROACH



HissHiss

START

6 a.m.

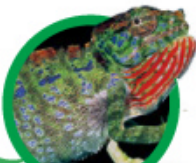


TallTails

Wakey-wakey! Who's ready to take a #SunSalutationSelfie with me?



I don't do lemur yoga. But I wouldn't say no to lying around and warming up my cold-blooded body. 😎



ColorChange



Leaf me out of that sunshine nonsense. My happy place is the dark forest floor.



HissHiss

Sunbathing lemurs? Sounds like a hot breakfast to me. 😊



TopClaw

12 p.m.



TallTails

Ugh—I hate it when two male lemurs try to show off with a stink fight. They use their smell to win a date, but is that *really* winning? 🤢

That sounds gross even to me ... and I live in rotten leaves. Try some music. Male cockroaches sing—er, hiss—to get my attention.



HissHiss

Fossas just yowl at each other to get a date.



TopClaw

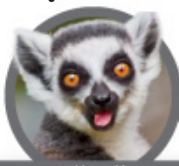


Lame much? For my species, being colorful is the best way to impress. #CheckMeOut



ColorChange

10 p.m.



TallTails



My troop is heading over to our sleep cave.

Oh, right ... which cave was it again?



TopClaw

You *know* the lemurs keep that a secret—especially from you.



HissHiss



Cut me some slack. I'm just trying to feed my pups—they're so cute!



TopClaw



You want to see cute? Check out this baby!



ColorChange



TallTails

Oh, yeah, ColorChange. She's very ... um ... cute. 😍

PAVEL KOVACS / SHUTTERSTOCK (LEMUR JUMPING); JEANU / SHUTTERSTOCK (LEMUR PROFILE, ALL); NICK GARBUTT / OKAPIA / BIOSPHOTO (CHAMELEON PROFILE, ALL); JAK WONDERLY / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (FOSSA PROFILE, ALL); ALEKSEY STEMMER / SHUTTERSTOCK (COCKROACH PROFILE, ALL); YK / SHUTTERSTOCK (LEMUR SUNBATHING); MARK MOFFETT / MINDEN PICTURES (COCKROACH IN LEAVES); PREMAPHOTOS / ALAMY (CHAMELEON ON BRANCH); ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO (FOSSA PUPS); NICK GARBUTT / INDRI IMAGES (YOUNG CHAMELEON); PINGEBAT / SHUTTERSTOCK (CARTOON FACES, ALL)



# BACK TALK

1. **Fill in** the thought balloon.
2. **Cut out** the entire picture (or make a photocopy of it).
3. **Mail** it along with your name, address, phone number, and date of birth to **Nat Geo Kids, Back Talk, P.O. Box 96000, Washington, DC 20090-6000**. Selection for publication in a future issue will be at the discretion of *Nat Geo Kids*.



## FROM THE MAY 2018 ISSUE

**Cloudy with a chance of nose hair!**

Landon T., 11  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**Back up! It's still the gazelles' turn!**

Paige F., 10  
Anchorage, Alaska

**OK, next you guys wash me.**

Shivam S., 12  
Katy, Texas

**Do you think your stripes will wash off?**

Sarah R., 12  
Boardman, Ohio



**Do you like my new shower setting?**

Wynne T., 11  
Freehold, New Jersey

**Free water park!**

Julia W., 9  
Tavares, Florida

**You have entered the splash zone.**

Ava L., 11  
Drums, Pennsylvania

**Seriously, guys, how long have you gone without a bath?**

Emory S., 12  
Alabaster, Alabama

**Answers**  
(page 28): The spy is near.  
"Explorer Academy"  
(page 30): Top row: jelly bean, window, fish. Middle row: blimp, cat's eye, stadium. Bottom row: beetle, opal, kiwi fruit.  
"Stump Your Parents"  
(page 32): 1. B, 2. D, 3. A, 4. C, 5. B, 6. B, 7. D, 8. A, 9. A.