

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

The Sand Cat

Sand cats are named for their desert home. You might mistake one for an odd-looking house cat. Unlike a house cat, sand cats have a body made for desert life.

With their sand-colored fur, sand cats disappear against the dunes. This is useful for a desert hunter, but it makes it hard for people to see them in the wild. When people do see a sand cat, the first thing they notice are its ears.

The sand cat's odd look comes from their ears. The ears sit wider apart and lower on their head than those of a house cat. This protects their ears from blowing sand. In the desert, a house cat's ears would fill up with sand on a windy day.



The sand cat's ears are important for hunting. Desert hunters need sharp hearing. Sound does not travel well in the desert. The hot, dry air swallows it up.

Sand cats hunt small rodents that live in tunnels under the sand. The sand cat's low-set ears help them hear their prey under the ground.

The Sand cat's large ears also help them beat the desert heat. Veins lie just under the skin in their ears. Heat escapes from the blood as it flows close to the surface.

The sand cat's ears may look odd, but they make fine tools for life in the desert.



Exercises:

1. Choose the correct answer.

What might you mistake a sand cat for?

- a. A large rat.
- b. A dog.
- c. A house cat.
- d. A pony.

What does the sand cat's low set ears collect less of?

- a. Water.
- b. Blowing sand.
- c. Fleas.
- d. Blowing leaves.

What can a sand cat hear?

- a. Water moving under the sand.
- b. The stars twinkling at night.
- c. The people talking in nearby towns.
- d. Prey tunneling under the sand.

2. Circle the correct choice in the sentences below.

- a. Sand cats are named for their (desert/island) home.
- b. Sand cats look odd because of their (ears/tail).
- c. The sand cat's ears help them beat the (heat/cold).

Answers:

1. Choose the correct answer.

What might you mistake a sand cat for?

c. A house cat.

What does the sand cat's low set ears collect less of?

b. Blowing sand.

What can a sand cat hear?

d. Prey tunneling under the sand.

2. Circle the correct choice in the sentences below.

a. Sand cats are named for their

(desert/island) home.

b. Sand cats look odd because of their

(ears/tail).

c. The sand cat's ears help them beat the

(heat/cold).

3. Answers will vary.