

KEYSTAGE 2 ENGLISH
Fascinating animal facts

1. Read 'Fascinating Animal Facts' and answer the questions.

Fascinating Animal Facts

- **Do fish sleep?**

When fish sleep their bodies slow down, but their brain wave patterns don't change. Not having eyelids, they can't close their eyes, but they become less aware of their environment. So fish do sleep, but not quite in the way that we think of sleep.

- **Why do I find spiders in my bath?**

Baths are a kind of spider trap. The main reason you find spiders in your bath is that they can't get out! There are more spiders in most homes than we realise, and when one slips into your bath the slippery sides make it almost impossible for it to escape.

- **Why do bats hang upside down?**

Bats often roost in caves or other dark, sheltered places. It is much safer for them to rest off the ground, but in most caves there isn't much to hold onto. To overcome this problem they have needed to evolve specially adapted claws to grip hard rock surfaces in the roof. This means they then have no alternative but to hang in an inverted position.

- **Why don't budgies fall off their perches when asleep?**

Birds' feet have evolved so that when at rest the muscles and tendons are clenching their claws together. They have to make a special effort to unclench their feet. If ever you find a dead bird you will see that its feet are naturally clenched.

- **Why do elephants have big ears?**

Its enormous body size means there is a constant danger that an elephant will overheat. The ears have therefore developed to act rather like a car radiator - as the blood flows through the large surface area of the ears a breeze will cool it down. If there is no breeze the elephant will often be seen gently flapping its ears.

- **Why do fish swim in shoals?**

Fish swim in shoals to protect themselves from predators. An unwelcome intruder is more likely to be spotted because a shoal has many pairs of eyes. When a predator attacks, the chances of a particular individual being taken are considerably reduced, hence the saying, "There's safety in numbers." As well as coming together for protection, fish also gather into groups in the spawning season. Also, swimming together provides a more streamlined way of moving through the water.

Copy these sentences, and think of a sensible word to fill each gap.

1. When fish sleep their _____ slow down.
2. The slippery sides of a bath make it _____ for a spider to climb out.
3. Bats have special _____ to help them hang upside down.
4. Budgies' feet are naturally _____ when they sleep.
5. An _____ has large ears to help it keep cool.
6. Fish swim in shoals to _____ themselves from attack.

Write a sentence to answer each question.

1. Do spiders get into baths by coming up the plug hole?
 2. Why might it be unsafe for bats to roost on the ground?
 3. How can we tell that birds naturally clench their feet?
 4. Give three reasons why fish often swim in shoals.
 5. What happens to a fish's brain pattern when it sleeps?
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1. Find a word or phrase in one of the passages that means the same as:
 - a) the place where fish live
 - b) to hang upside down
 - c) gripping firmly
 - d) very large
 - e) creatures likely to attack other creatures
 2. Think of a sensible ending for each of these sentences.
Write the complete sentence in your book.
A reference book maybe useful to check your answers.
 - a) Giraffes evolved with long necks so that ...
 - b) Some people think wolves howl at the moon because ...
 - c) We know what dinosaurs looked like by ...
 - d) Tigers have stripes to ...
 - e) Cactuses have thorns to prevent ...

