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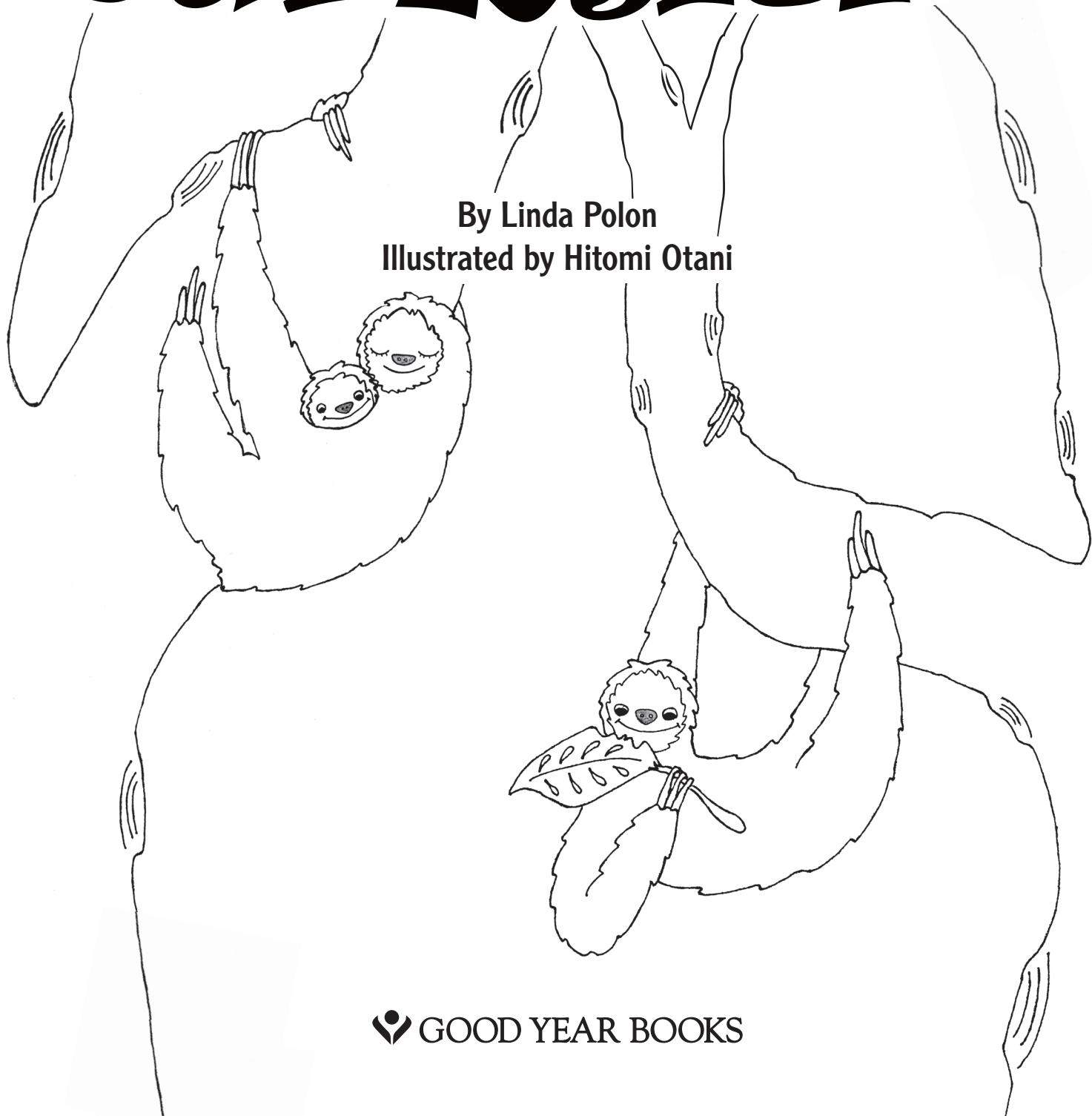
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Animal Curiosities

By Linda Polon
Illustrated by Hitomi Otani



Dedication

I dedicate this work to Phillip Frascinella, who child-tested this book; my close friends Philene Vaivods and Gail Hendricks, who are survivors; my writer friend Jules Minton; Ruth Mezquita, a supportive friend; and Rebecca Farish, who has brightened my life. I would also like to dedicate this book to my caring family—Courtney, Ewan, and Ryan McNeil, Debby Wolff, and Rosalie Abrams, and my second mom, Helen Kinsley—and to all the animals who share our planet.

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Animal Curiosities contains lessons and activities that develop skills as defined by the Common Core State Standards for grades 4 through 6. These lessons meet the Common Core standards for Reading Informational Texts as mentioned below:

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
3. Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

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Preface

Welcome to the wonderful world of *Animal Curiosities*! I wrote this book because of my true love of animals, and a wish to share my fascinating and compelling studies of them with you. Perhaps you have heard of some of these intriguing creatures, or perhaps not. In any event, I hope you enjoy reading about how they live and survive in their environments. Dive in and explore all of these extraordinary and exceptional animals.

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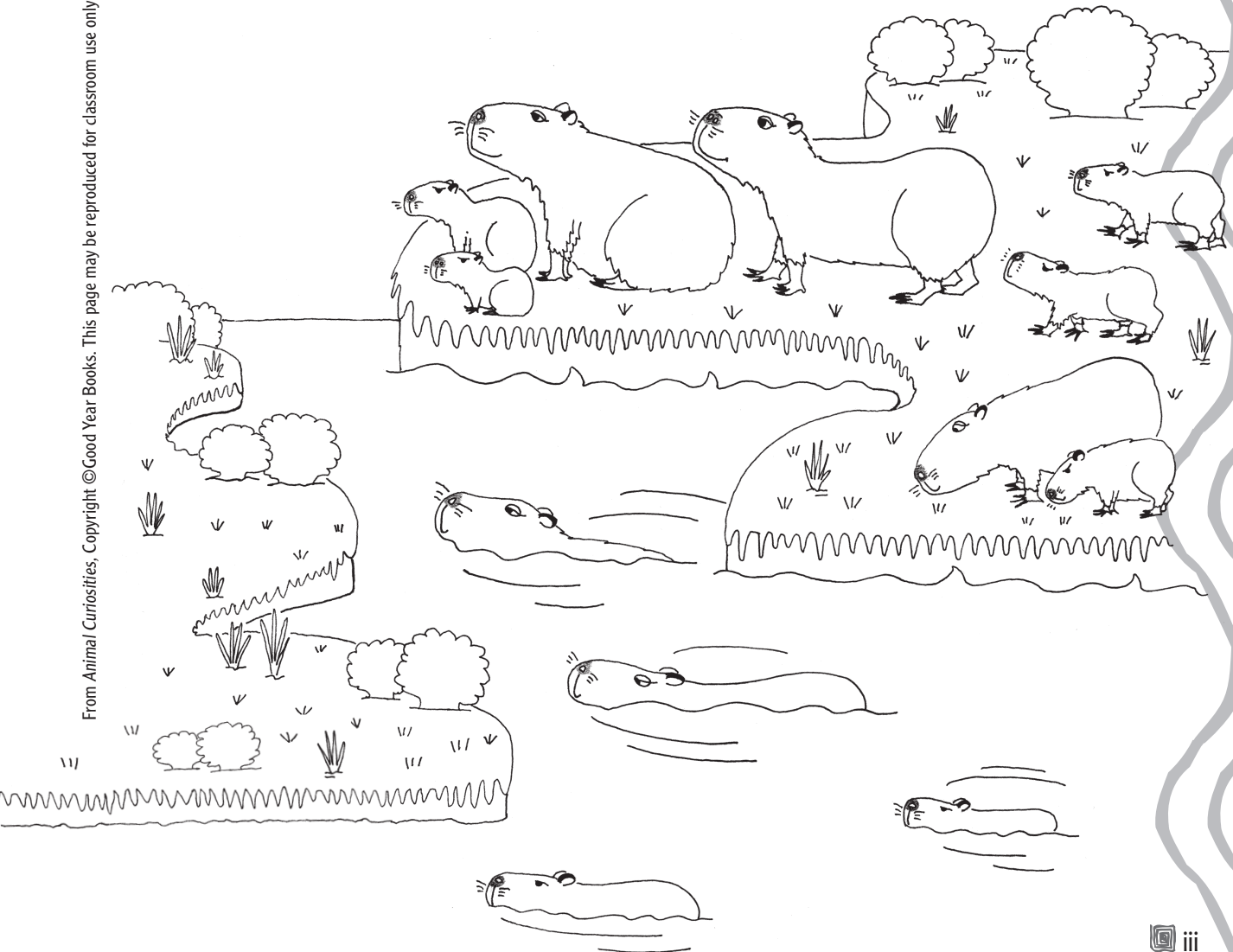


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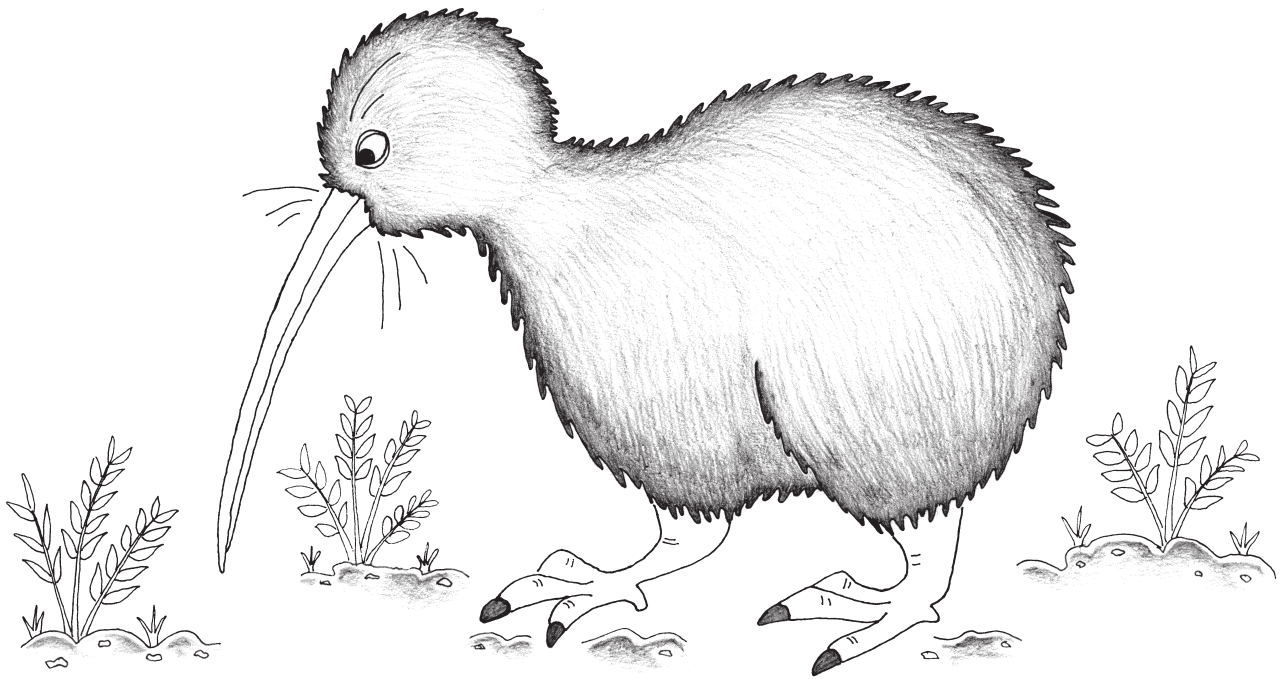
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Animals



Mudskipper

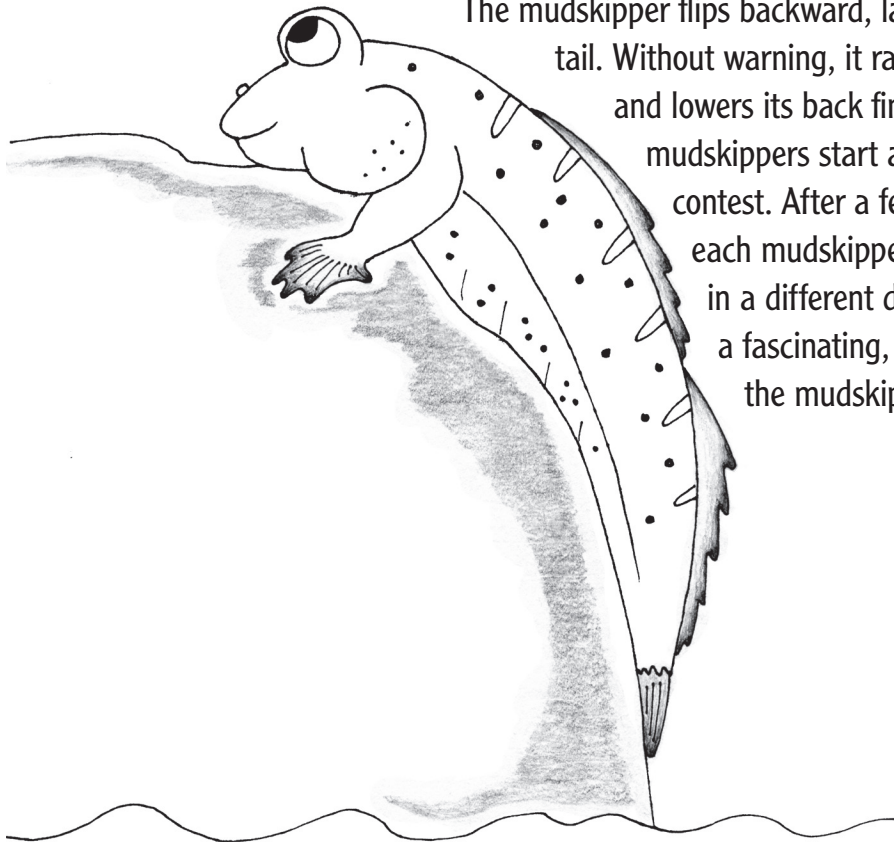
Would you believe there is a fish that lives out of water most of its life? That fish is called an *amphibian fish*, or *mudskipper*. The mudskipper is usually greenish brown and is four to 12 inches long. It resides in swampy areas on the coasts of Africa, Australia, Japan, and India and in other tropical and temperate regions of the world.

The mudskipper has an interesting way of breathing out of water for up to 36 hours. After that time, its gills become dry. There is no more oxygen inside them, so the mudskipper returns to the water of the swamp. The mudskipper has special cavities behind its ears where brackish water (a combination of river water and salt water from a nearby ocean) from the swamp enters. This water provides the oxygen the mudskipper needs to crawl back on land. A few scientists think a mudskipper places its long tail in the water to absorb oxygen.

This animal likes doing back flips, skips, and jumps around the muddy mangrove flats. It hops around the swamp or perches on mangrove tree roots. The mudskipper utilizes its pectoral fins on either side of its body to climb onto the gigantic tree roots.

The mudskipper has a funny, unusual way to protect its own territory, which is about three feet around. When meeting another mudskipper, it does strange movements.

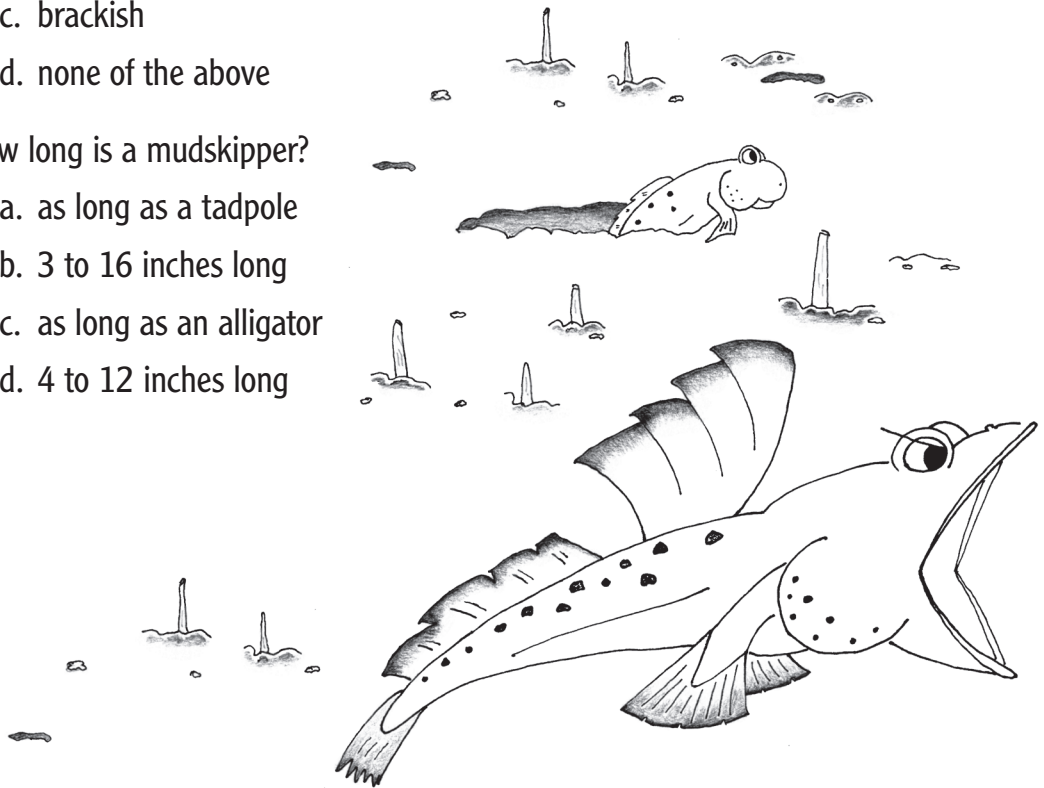
The mudskipper flips backward, landing on its tail. Without warning, it rapidly raises and lowers its back fins. Then, both mudskippers start a pushing contest. After a few minutes, each mudskipper crawls away in a different direction. What a fascinating, unique fish is the mudskipper!



Mudskipper

A. Circle the letter next to the best answer to each question.

1. What is the main idea of the story?
 - a. The mudskipper crawls on mangrove tree roots.
 - b. The mudskipper lives most of its life out of the water.
 - c. The mudskipper fights over its territory.
 - d. The mudskipper lays its eggs in a burrow.
2. How can a mudskipper breathe out of water?
 - a. It can't breathe out of water, because it is a fish.
 - b. It takes gulps of air.
 - c. It breathes oxygen from water-filled cavities behind its ears.
 - d. It jumps into the water every hour to breathe oxygen.
3. The mangrove swamps are so close to the ocean that the mixture of waters has what name?
 - a. clear
 - b. muddy
 - c. brackish
 - d. none of the above
4. How long is a mudskipper?
 - a. as long as a tadpole
 - b. 3 to 16 inches long
 - c. as long as an alligator
 - d. 4 to 12 inches long

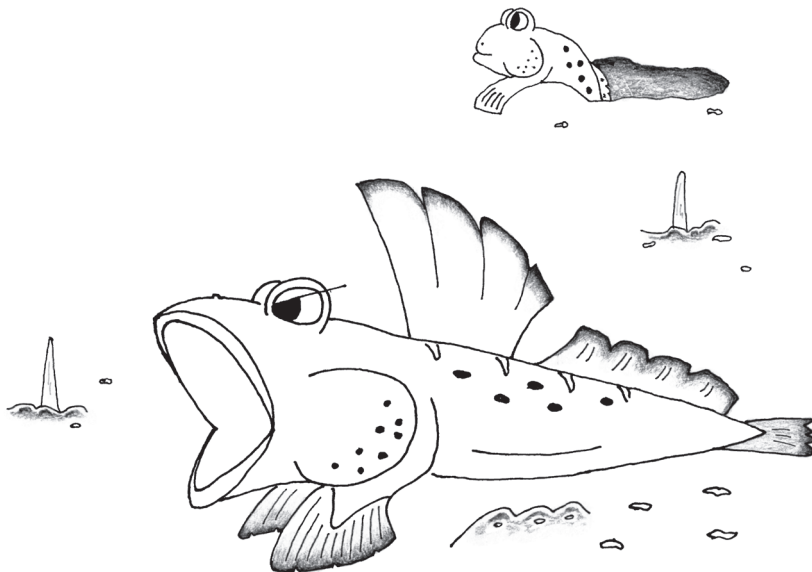


5. When the mudskipper stays out of the water, where does it remain?
 - a. on the rocks
 - b. on lily pads
 - c. on muddy mangrove flats
 - d. none of the above

6. What does the male mudskipper dig so the female can lay her eggs?
 - a. burrow
 - b. tunnel
 - c. hole
 - d. none of above

7. What is a good title for this story?
 - a. How a Mudskipper Uses Its Fins
 - b. The Muddy Mangrove Swamps
 - c. Getting Oxygen from the Water
 - d. A Mudskipper's Life

8. What is the author's purpose of this story?
 - a. to inform the reader about the life of a mudskipper
 - b. to persuade the reader to fly to a country where mudskippers live
 - c. to entertain the reader by telling how funny the mudskipper can be



B. Words can have more than one meaning. For each of the following words, find the synonym, or word with the similar meaning.

1. resides

- a. lives
- b. travels
- c. likes

2. absorbs

- a. breaks off
- b. gives away
- c. soaks up

3. utilizes

- a. pushes
- b. uses
- c. trims

