

Name _____

Date _____

Animal Tool Users

Key Words

employs

food

Scientist

basic needs

shelter

tool

wild

environment

Human beings were once defined as the “tool users”, but that was before **scientists** began to study the **wild**. Now we know that many animals in the wild also use tools. The study of tool use in animals shows animals have the ability to use problem-solving skills demonstrating intelligence. Does the ability of animals to use tools make them as intelligent as humans? Many people define intelligence as the ability to adapt to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. This knowledge can be used to make your **environment**, the surroundings in which an organism lives, serve your purposes. We can clearly see in all that humans have created and done that we stand apart from animals in this area. Though animal tool usage does represent intelligence. Tool use in primates (apes) is particularly interesting because they have used tools for a very long time.

Some animals, such as the sea otter, use **tools** to get **food**. Tools can help animals to provide for their **basic needs** such as food and shelter. The otter’s favorite food is clams, but a clam can close its shell so tightly that even a strong person might have trouble prying it open. Yet the sea otter has no problem. First, it picks up a rock. Floating on its back, the otter holds a clam against its chest. Then the otter uses the rock to smash open the shell so that it can eat the clam.

Chimpanzees **employs** tools to catch termites. Chimps pull the leaves off the stem of a plant, stick the stem into a termite mound, and “fish” for a meal. When the chimp pulls the stem out of the mound, the termites are hanging on with their strong jaws, and the chimp eats them off the stem. Chimps also use rocks to crack open nuts, and the use leaves to scoop water from places that are hard to reach.

Some animals use tools to build shelters. A little songbird in Asia makes its nest in a large folded leaf. It uses its beak as a needle to sew the edges of the leaf together and make a bag that it lines with grass and hair. The “thread” for its needle can be vegetable fibers or fine strips of silk or wool. Guess what this creature is called? It is called a tailorbird!

1. Chimpanzees use a plant stem to catch—

- A bees
- B clams
- C fireflies
- D termites

2. This article is MOSTLY about—

- A sea otters using rocks
- B chimps eating termites
- C scientists studying animals
- D animals using tools to survive

3. You can infer from the article that chimps—

- A know that termites live in the mound
- B use only certain kinds of plant stems
- C learned the fishing technique by watching people
- D fish for ants the same way as they do termites

4. What does the sea otter do FIRST when it wants to eat?

- A It eats a clam.
- B It picks up a rock.
- C It smashes the clam with a rock.
- D It holds a clam against its chest.

5. Which of the following statements is an opinion?

- A Chimps use leaves to scoop up water.
- B Sea otters can float on their back.
- C Chimps are the smartest animals.
- D Tailorbirds sew the edges of a leaf together.

6. The sea otter uses a rock to open clams because—

- A clams make the otter angry
- B clams close their shells tightly
- C it is very hungry
- D it likes seafood

7. In paragraph 3, the word employs means—

- A hires
- B uses
- C buys
- D breaks

8. How does using tools help animals survive?

9. How do animals use tools to help them meet their basic needs?

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