

Write one important fact from each paragraph in this space.

## Science Shorts -7

### Here's Looking at You, Kid

Long, long ago, when Earth was still quite young, life was very simple. Most of it, in fact, was microscopic, floating invisibly in the newly formed oceans. And yet these primitive creatures still knew a little something about the world around them. They knew light and dark, and they could sense warmth and cold, things to something called eyespots, small clump of cells that are sensitive to light. The eyespots worked well enough for the first life-forms, but they would never do for the more complex animals that were to come. Something better would be needed.

All animals' eyes are special and unique because each species has different needs. Animals that hunt other animals are called predators. Just being able to see motion is not enough. Predators must also be able to judge distance. Predatory birds, like the eagle, watch for food as they soar high above the ground. That's why birds have the best distance vision of any creatures on Earth.

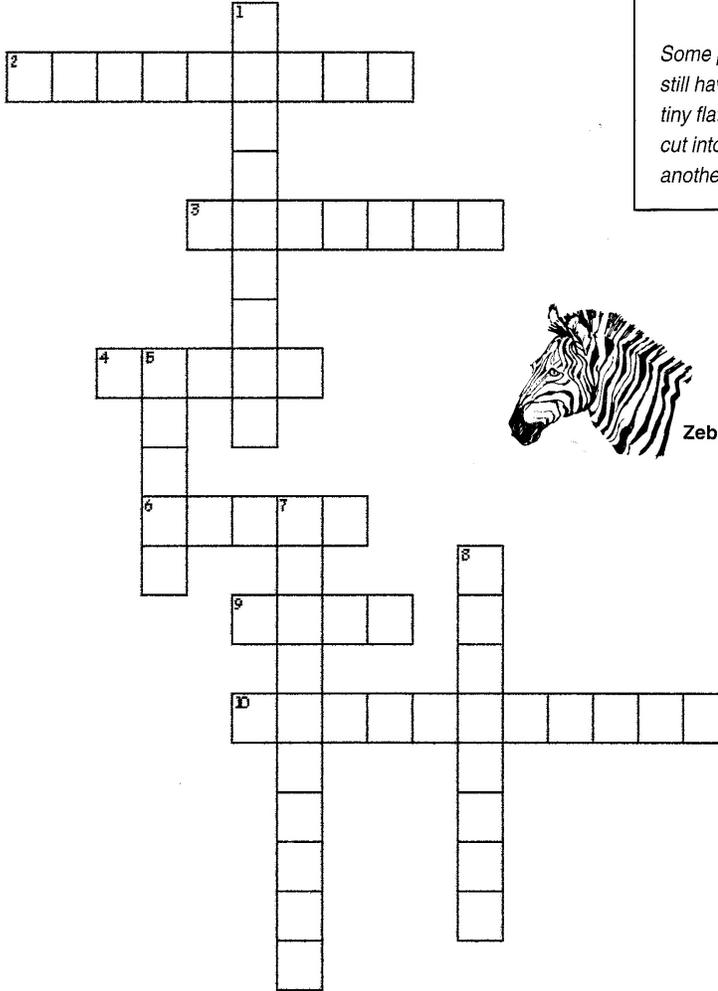
But what about the animals that are hunted? What about the prey? The zebra, rabbit and mouse are all prey to other animals, but they're not helpless. Their eyes are different than predator's eyes. Their eyes are on either side of their head. This is a perfect position because it lets an animal see if something is sneaking up behind it.

Animals' eyes can be located in some very wacky places – at least that's what we might think. But to a hermit crab, having your eyes at the ends of long stalks is a good idea indeed. The hermit crab has a very soft body but no shell to protect it. So it scrounges around on the beach, looking for shells that other animals have left behind. Very often these shells are huge and would block much of the hermit crab's vision if it weren't for nature's version of the periscope. The crab's stalk eyes clear the shell and allow the crab to see all around it.

Many animals, like the raccoon and skunk, are nocturnal. Nocturnal animals are active at night. When the sun sets and the land grows dark, nocturnal animals find themselves in a world with very little color. Nocturnal animals have poor color vision. Raccoons can't really see anything brighter than the color green. Red, yellow and orange just look dark to them. But what nocturnal animals do need is good night vision.

Animals have eyes that allow them to gather the information they need to survive in their environment. For some species, this means being able to escape predators. For others, survival means being able to catch prey animals. In either case, the eyes of the animal help it accomplish its goals.

# Here's Looking at You, Kid





Some primitive animals like the planarian still have eyespots. The planarian is a very tiny flatworm with a special talent. If it is cut into pieces, each piece will grow into another planarian!



Zebra



Rabbit



Mouse

**Across**

- 2. Animals that are active at night
- 3. Type of nocturnal animal
- 4. Type of prey
- 6. Something eyespots can sense
- 9. Animals that are hunted
- 10. Very tiny

**Down**

- 1. Animals that hunt other animals
- 5. Type of predator
- 7. Animal that must scrounge for a shell
- 8. Small clumps of cells that are sensitive to light