

Educator's Guide



Educational extensions for the **February 2013** issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

PICTURING SEALS

Read **“Life on the Ice”** (pages 6-11), paying special attention to the photos. Ask students to choose which seal photo is their favorite. Why? How does it make them feel? How are photos different from words when it comes to evoking feelings? Have students write their answers to these questions or discuss them in small groups.

LAUGHING RATS

“The Buzz” (pages 12-13) describes new research showing that rats seem to laugh when tickled. What do students think of this finding? Ask them to explain how the scientists came to their conclusion about the laughter. Do students agree? What experiment would they like to do as a follow-up to this one? Design a mock experiment together, discussing a hypothesis and how you would test it.

CLIMATE CONNECTIONS

In **“Ranger Rick’s Adventures: Penguins in Peril”** (pages 14-17), Rick, Scarlett, Boomer, and their penguin friends encounter melting ice in Antarctica. Global climate change is a complex and frightening topic, but there are lots of resources to help students understand it and its possible solutions. Explore NASA’s Climate Kids website together at climatekids.nasa.gov/ to learn more.

VALENTINE’S HOW-TO

Read **“Ways Birds Say ‘I Love You’”** (pages 18-23). List the examples from the story and ask students to draw parallels with things people do. Then invite students to write and illustrate a Valentine’s Day how-to guide for people, adapting each example in the story to give ideas that people can use to show family and friends they care.

FOR REAL OR FISHY?

The funny illustrations in **“All in a Day’s Work”** (pages 24-27) make the examples of fish “jobs” seem like they could be cartoon exaggerations. But these fish really do the things described in the text. Ask students to analyze each illustration and note which elements aren’t real. Then ask them to describe or draw what they’d expect to see in a real-life photo of each behavior.

HISTORY OF PETS

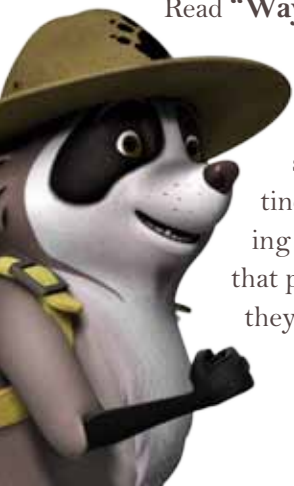
In **“Ask Rick”** (page 28), you learn that fossil evidence suggests people have been keeping dogs as pets for 15,000 years. That’s a long time! Delve into some research with your students to learn more about the history of people keeping pets. What other evidence tells us about long-ago relationships between animals and humans? How do pets’ lives today compare with their lives in the past? Are there cultural differences in how pets are regarded?

WHAT MAKES A MONSTER?

Read **“Desert Monster”** (pages 30-35) and discuss the key word in the title: “monster.” What makes something a monster? Does the word always refer to something imagined, or can monsters be real? What about dragons? (See pages 36-39.) Have students make concept maps to organize their thoughts.

DRAWING DRAGONS

The **“Just for Fun”** games (pages 36-39) feature many real-life “dragons.” Look up photos of some of these dragons with students to see how they might have gotten their names. Then write the name of each dragon on a note card and give each student a card. Play a game of charades in which students act out the dragon on their card for their classmates to guess.



Letter from a Gila Monster



Gila monsters don't have the best reputation. But when you read "Desert Monster" (pages 30-35), you learn that they're not really dangerous—although they are very interesting.

How could Gila monsters help more people understand them? One way people share information or opinions with others is to write a Letter to the Editor and send it to a newspaper. Try it!

Pretend you are a Gila monster and write a Letter to the Editor in the lizard's voice. In your letter, include the following three things to help Gila monsters improve their image.

- Explain that you'd like more respect from humans.
- Show why you deserve it, giving examples.
- Debunk myths about your "monstrous" traits.

Dear Editor:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Sincerely,

Seal of Approval



Read about harp seals in "Life on the Ice" (pages 6-11). Harp seal babies need specific things in order to survive. What gets their "seal of approval"? For each pair of items below, circle which item is best for baby harp seals. Then explain why this works for them, even if it might not sound perfect to us.

1. A cold chunk of ice in a slushy sea OR A cozy warm burrow underground

Which gets the "seal of approval"? Why? _____

2. Smooth scales for swimming OR A warm fur coat and a layer of blubber

Which gets the "seal of approval"? Why? _____

3. Rich milk (with ten times more fat than cow's milk) every three hours OR A big, fresh-caught fish

Which gets the "seal of approval"? Why? _____

4. A year with Mom to learn the ways of seals OR A few weeks alone with no food

Which gets the "seal of approval"? Why? _____

5. A warm pool to try swimming for the first time OR An icy cold first swim in the sea

Which gets the "seal of approval"? Why?

