SEA LIONS
Before students read “Beach Bums,” pages 6–11, have them complete the true-false chart on the student page called What Do You Know About Sea Lions? After children have read the story, have them complete the rest of the student page. Then as a class, discuss students’ responses to all the statements.

Help students identify the differences between sea lions and seals, by reading about their similarities and differences on pages 22–23 of this issue.

ANIMALS THAT LOOK ALIKE
Before reading “What’s the Difference?” pages 14–19, have students examine photos of the crocodile and alligator on pages 14–15. As a class, discuss how these two animals look alike and how they look different. Organize students’ observations into a Venn diagram (see template below). Write characteristics that the two animals share in the space where the circles overlap; jot down distinct characteristics in the other part of the circles.

After students read the story, divide them into small groups and have them “diagram” the differences between other animal pairs in the article.

BEEWOLVES
Read “Bye-Bye, Bee!” pages 22–25. Then use the following as discussion questions or writing prompts.

• Why do you think this story is called “Bye-Bye, Bee”?  
• What would be some other good titles?  
• How do you think the beewolf got its name?  
• The photographs are an important part of this story. Could you tell what was happening if you just looked at the pictures? What about if you just read the words?  
• How do the pictures and words work together to tell the whole story?

Help students identify the differences between bees and wasps, by reading about their similarities and differences on pages 24–25 of this issue.

PUFFLINGS IN PERIL
This month’s Ranger Rick Adventures, pages 27–29, describes how children on a tiny island off the coast of Iceland rescue baby puffins called pufflings. After students read the story, assign the Thinking About the Story student page. The questions on this page help children summarize the text and make connections between major themes of the story and themselves.

If the class is interested in learning more about how young people help pufflings, read aloud the popular children’s book, Night of the Pufflings by Bruce McMillan.
1. Before you read “Beach Bums,” pages 6–11, complete the chart below using your best guesses. For each statement, check True or False.

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2. After you read “Beach Bums,” look at your answers in the chart above. Are there any you’d like to change? If so, go ahead and change them.

3. Now select one of the statements in the chart and explain why the answer you chose is correct. Use complete sentences. And back up your answer with facts from the story.

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Ranger Rick, Scarlett, and Boomer are climbing up the steep side of an island in Iceland. Rick has promised that they’ll get to see some clowns when they reach the top. I’m not sure if I can go any farther.

Too bad you don’t have wings.

Nice to meet you. I’m Polly Puffin.

I don’t get it. What kind of clowns would be way up here?

You’ll see. We just have to climb a little more.

I think I’m going to have a heart attack!

Wow, look how high we’ve climbed so far! Our boat looks so tiny.

Hey, are you wearing makeup?

No, Boomer. We puffins get these colorful faces during our breeding season, when we come to land to nest and raise young. The rest of the year, we spend our time at sea.

So people call us “clowns of the sea.”

If you can make it a little farther, I’ll show you our nesting area. See you up there!

The “clowns” we’re here to see are puffins! Oh! I get it now!

Looks like you got a burst of energy, Boom! Yep—I’m excited to see the nests. Though I hope we don’t have to climb any trees to see them. That would be awesome!

Oh, hello, there! I’m Scarlett, and these are Rick and Boomer.

1. How would you describe a puffin to someone who has never seen one?

2. Why do some people call puffins “the clowns of the sea”?

3. Puffins spend most of their lives at sea. Why do they come ashore each spring?

4. What are pufflings?

5. Why do some puffins need to be rescued?

6. The children in the story worked with a special organization to help the lost pufflings. Describe some trouble that another kind of animal might have. How might children help?