

Nonfiction

Meerkat Family

by Donna Loughran



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PAIRED
READ

Poetry

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Reread

Skill: Main Topic and Key
Details

High-Frequency Words

eat, no, of, under, who

Phonics

Ending consonant blends:
nd, nk, nt, st, sk, mp

Content Standards

Science

Life Science

Word count: 345**

Photography Credit: Cover; Ed Reschke/Peter Arnold/Getty Images.

**The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



Education

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A



Essential Question

Where do animals live together?

Meerkat Family



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Chapter 1

Who Are the Meerkats?

Meet the meerkat family!
They live on the tip of Africa.
Meerkats live in large groups.
Few animals work with each
other as well as meerkats do.
Aren't they fun to watch?



Meerkats live in the
south African plains.



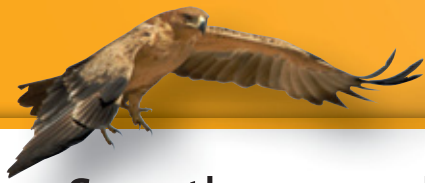
Tim Jackson/Oxford Scientific/Getty Images, (map) Rob Schuster



The dark fur around the meerkats' eyes helps them see in the bright sun.



Meerkats have spotted fur and ink black noses. Is that a mask around their bright eyes?
No. It's dark fur!



See the meerkats sit up tall!
They have long tails that help
them stand. What do you think
these meerkats see? It may be
a bird looking for a snack.

Hawks and eagles
hunt meerkats.





Some large birds hunt meerkats for food. The meerkats keep watch. They cry out when it is not safe.

Meerkats hunt for food as well. They eat bugs and plants. They eat small animals like mice too!

Can you close your ears?
Meerkats can shut their tiny ears tightly! This keeps out the desert sand when the meerkats dig.



Curved front claws help meerkats move a lot of sand and dirt each day.



A meerkat mob will use up to five burrows at a time.

Chapter 2

Where Do Meerkats Live?

Meerkats dig burrows with their long claws. A burrow is a home under the ground. Meerkats move from one burrow to the next.

There are many ways to get in and out of the burrow. A burrow has many rooms that are joined by tunnels. It may be hot outside, but the rooms stay cool.

Meerkats take turns standing guard to protect the pups.



Meerkats rest in the burrows. This is where they have their babies too. Baby meerkats are called pups. Aren't they cute?



Nigel Dennis/Gallo Images/Getty Images, Martin Harvey/Peter Arnold/Getty Images

Chapter 3:

Who Watches the Pups?

Who takes care of the babies? The adult meerkats do! They take turns sitting and watching the pups. These adults help carry the pups when the group moves.



Paul A. Souders/Terra/CORBIS

While the mother meerkat searches for food, other adults stay with the pups.

The baby meerkats learn to hide. They learn to jump and run. Baby meerkats make a cute peeping sound when they play. They are safe and cared for in their meerkat family!

Bobby Jo Clow/Flickr/Getty Images



Respond to Reading

Retell

Use the chart to retell what you learned in *Meerkat Family*.

Main Topic		
Detail	Detail	Detail

Text Evidence

1. What animals hunt meerkats?

Main Topic and Key Details

2. What do meerkats eat? Main Topic

and Key Details

3. Is *Meerkat Family* fiction or nonfiction? How do you know?

Genre



Compare Texts

Read about the different places people and animals live.

I Live in a House!



Who is that under
the house?

Look! I see a little mouse!
See *my* house by the tree.
I live there with my family!



People live in many places.
Animals live in wild spaces.
Fish swim and live at sea.
But I live with my family!

I wish I could sail away,
To see all the whales at play!
Then I'd sail home to see
My happy little family!



Marilyn Janovitz



Make Connections

Where do animals and people live?

Text to Text

Focus on Science

Purpose To find out how and where animals live

What to Do

Step 1

Think about the animals in your neighborhood. Think about where they live.

.....

Step 2

Pick one animal to watch. Draw a picture to show your animal and where it lives.

.....

Step 3

Write a few sentences that tell about your animal.

Conclusion Share your drawing and writing with the class.

Thinkmark

The Topic

What did you learn about in *Meerkat Family*?

Conclusions

How would you describe meerkat families to someone who did not read the book?

Make Connections

Think about the poem *I Live in a House!* Where do the animals live? Where do you live?