



Essential Question

How do animals adapt to challenges in their habitat?



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Adapt to Challenges

This ermine's fur is brown and white in the summer. It turns white in the winter and blends in with the snowy ground. This adaptation helps ermines escape its predators.

- ▶ Ermines are also fast runners and good climbers.
- ▶ They have an excellent sense of smell.
- ▶ Adaptations help ermines survive.

Talk About It



Write words you have learned about adaptation. Talk with a partner about ways animals have adapted.



Vocabulary

Use the picture and the sentence to talk with a partner about each word.



alert

Wolves howl to **alert** other wolves when danger is nearby.

How would you alert someone to talk quietly?



competition

Joe won the **competition** because he was the fastest runner.

What kind of competition have you participated in?



environment

The polar bear lives in a cold and snowy **environment**.

Describe a whale's environment.



excellent

Lily's **excellent** artwork won first place in the art show.

Tell about a time when something you did was excellent.



prefer

Simon and his friends **prefer** walking to riding their bikes.

What kind of transportation do you prefer?



protection

The skunk's scent provides **protection** from its enemies.

Tell what you use for protection on sunny days.



related

Josh and Jen are **related** because they are both members of the same family.

Name two animals that are related.



shelter

Our tent was a dry and safe **shelter** during the storm.

What is another kind of shelter people use?

Your Turn

COLLABORATE



Pick three words. Write three questions for your partner to answer.

Go Digital! Use the online visual glossary

GRAY WOLF!

RED FOX!



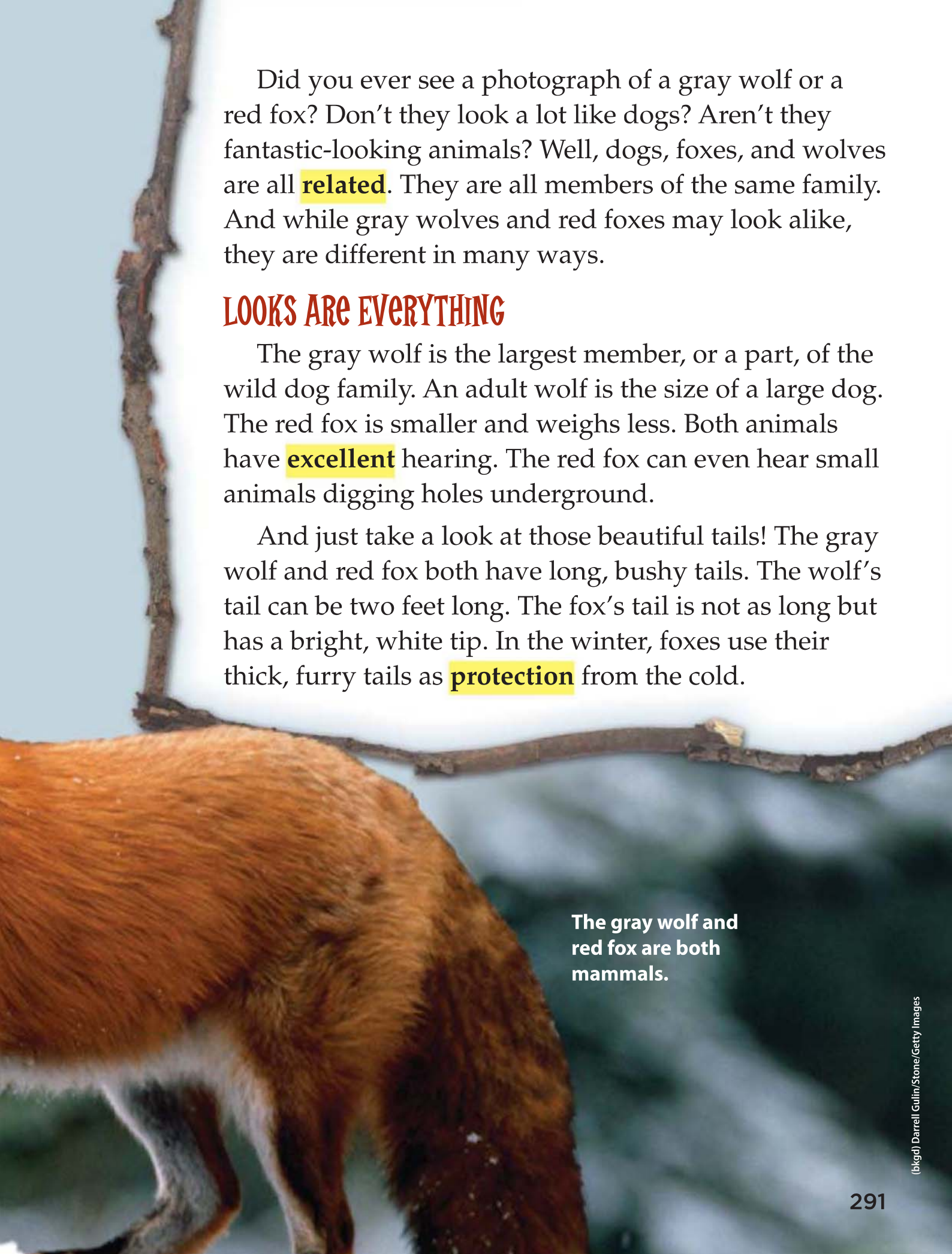
(l) James Hager/Robert Harding World Imagery/Getty Images



Essential Question

How do animals adapt to challenges in their habitat?

Read how gray wolves and red foxes adapt to challenges.



Did you ever see a photograph of a gray wolf or a red fox? Don't they look a lot like dogs? Aren't they fantastic-looking animals? Well, dogs, foxes, and wolves are all **related**. They are all members of the same family. And while gray wolves and red foxes may look alike, they are different in many ways.

LOOKS ARE EVERYTHING

The gray wolf is the largest member, or a part, of the wild dog family. An adult wolf is the size of a large dog. The red fox is smaller and weighs less. Both animals have **excellent** hearing. The red fox can even hear small animals digging holes underground.

And just take a look at those beautiful tails! The gray wolf and red fox both have long, bushy tails. The wolf's tail can be two feet long. The fox's tail is not as long but has a bright, white tip. In the winter, foxes use their thick, furry tails as **protection** from the cold.

The gray wolf and red fox are both mammals.

Foxes and wolves also have thick fur. Their coats can be white, brown, or black. However, red foxes most often have red fur, while a gray wolf's fur is usually more gray and brown.

FINDING FOOD

Gray wolves and red foxes live in many different habitats. They live in forests, deserts, woodlands, and grasslands. But as more people build roads and shopping centers, both animals have lost their homes. The red fox has adapted well, or made changes, to fit into its **environment**. Now more foxes make their homes close to towns and parks. Wolves, however, stay far away from towns and people.

Foxes and wolves are not in **competition** for food. They have different diets. Red foxes **prefer** to hunt alone and eat small animals, birds, and fish. They also like to raid garbage cans and campsites for food. Wolves work together in packs, or groups, to hunt large animals, such as moose and deer.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?



Gray wolves prefer to live and hunt in packs.

DAY-TO-DAY

Wolves live in packs of four to seven. They do almost everything together. They hunt, travel, and choose safe places to set up dens for **shelter**.

Foxes, on the other hand, like to live alone. They usually sleep in the open or find an empty rabbit hole to call home.

Both wolves and foxes communicate by barking and growling. The gray wolf also howls to **alert**, or warn, other wolves when there is danger nearby. The red fox signals in a different way. It waves its tail in the air to caution other foxes.

The gray wolf and red fox are members of the same family and have many things in common. But they really are two very different animals.



The red fox hunts for food alone.



Make Connections



How have the gray wolf and the red fox adapted to living in North America? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Which animal would you like to learn more about? Why? **TEXT TO SELF**