

Adapting to Survive



Talk About It

How is the insect in the photograph adapting to survive? How do you adapt to your surroundings?



Find out more about adaptation at

www.macmillanmh.com

Living in Alaska

by Marsha Adams

Vocabulary

shimmer climate
eerie silken
lurk lumbering
swallows



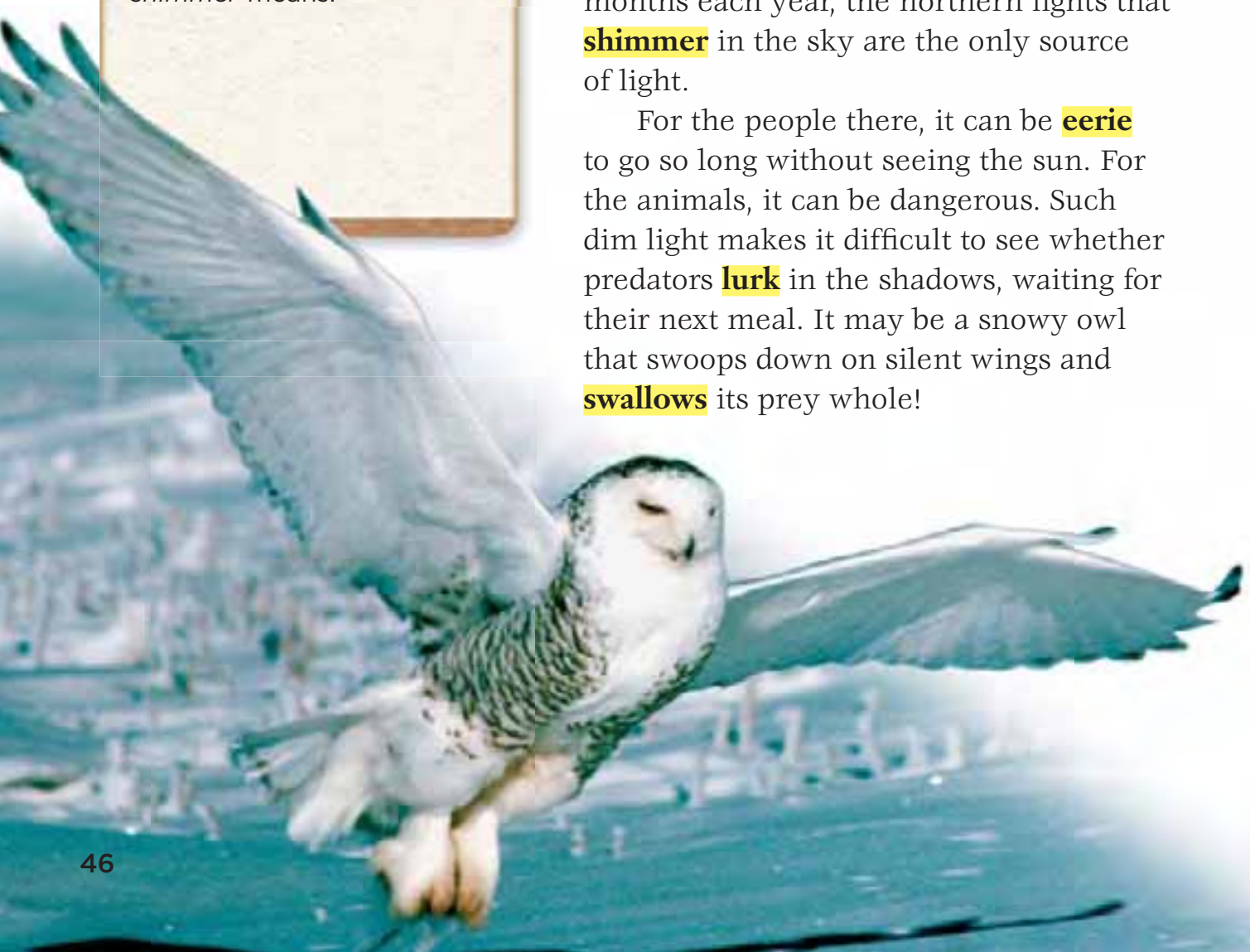
Context Clues

Surrounding Words can often help you figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Find *shimmer* in the story. Use the other words in the sentence to figure out what *shimmer* means.

Another World

In some ways, living in Alaska is like living in another world. Winter lasts for about nine months. For more than two months each year, the northern lights that **shimmer** in the sky are the only source of light.

For the people there, it can be **eerie** to go so long without seeing the sun. For the animals, it can be dangerous. Such dim light makes it difficult to see whether predators **lurk** in the shadows, waiting for their next meal. It may be a snowy owl that swoops down on silent wings and **swallows** its prey whole!



Winter Coats

Beavers, sea otters, and other mammals are adapted to survive in the cold Alaskan **climate**. They grow two layers of fur. The thick bottom layer is soft, **silken** fur that helps trap body heat. Longer, coarse hairs that form the outer layer act as a barrier against water, snow, and wind.

The ptarmigan, Alaska's state bird, has a special way to keep warm. It grows feathers down its legs, over its toes, and on the soles of its feet!



A Winter Nap

You won't find **lumbering** black or brown bears when the frigid weather arrives. Bears, mice, and other animals hibernate, or go into a deep sleep, during the winter. When they hibernate, their bodies don't need food or water. Other animals, such as some caterpillars, fish, and houseflies, actually freeze during the winter. Then they thaw out in the spring!

A Low Profile

Arctic plants have their own special traits that help them survive. During the summer months, the dark soil absorbs the sun's heat. So plants grow close to the ground where it's warmer. When snow falls, it protects the plants from the cold winds above.

Reread for Comprehension



Summarize

Main Idea and Details When you summarize what you've read, include the main idea and details. The main idea is the most important point of each paragraph or section. The details give information that supports it.

A Main Idea Chart can help you summarize what you've read. Reread the selection to find the main idea and supporting details.

Main Ideas	Details