

Name: _____

One Hump or Two?

by Kelly Hashway



Do you know what the hump of a camel is used for? If you answered to store water, guess again. This rumor about camels storing water in their humps has been around for a long time, but it's actually not true. A camel's hump is a storage place for fatty tissue.

Most animals, including humans, store fat throughout their bodies, beneath their skin. But camels store their fat in one place, their hump. A hump can weigh as much as 80 pounds. Why do camels store their fat this way? The answer is most likely because of their environment. Camels can go up to two weeks without eating because they have this fatty tissue to live off of. Since camels live in the desert where food is scarce, they need this storage of fat to survive.

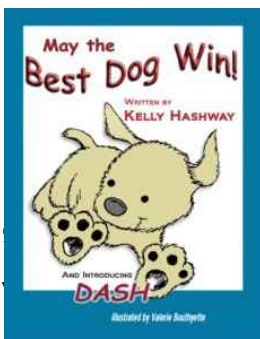
Camels have amazing survival skills built into their bodies. Their humps contribute to the camel staying cooler because all the body fat is concentrated to one area instead of being spread throughout the body. Also camels are great at handling changes in body temperature. They need to reach temperatures over 106 degrees Fahrenheit before they begin to sweat. And when they do sweat, it evaporates while on the camel's skin, instead of on its coat. This cools the camel much faster. Their coats also help them adapt to the heat. While the coat is thick, it reflects the sunlight and protects the camel from the heat that rises off the desert sand.

An adult camel measures just over six feet tall at its shoulder and over seven feet tall at its hump or humps. There are two kinds of camels, those with one hump and those with two humps. Camels with one hump are called Dromedary or Arabian camels. They live in the dry deserts in West Asia. Camels with two humps are called Bactrian camels. They live in Central and East Asia.

Besides their humps, camels have a lot of interesting features. They can live between 40-50 years. They can carry about 400 pounds and run up to 40 miles per hour. It's true that camels can go long periods of time without drinking water, and they can drink about 26 gallons of water at a time. If that's not interesting enough, camels have three sets of eyelids. Two of these sets come complete with eyelashes, while the third set is skin. Camels can also close their nostrils.

So whether a camel has one hump or two, it is one amazing creature that is very well adapted to its environment.

About the Author



Kelly Hashway's latest book, *May the Best Dog Win*, is now available!

Dash has the perfect life until the Super Sweeper 5000 shows up. Sweeper runs all over the house sucking up the leftover food scraps, and he even gets his own room! But Dash won't give up his place as the favorite dog fight.

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1. What is a camel's hump used for?
 - a. to store water
 - b. to store fat
 - c. to store food
 - d. to carry riders
2. How does the color of a camel's coat help it to survive in the desert?

3. Fill in the blank lines.

Camels with one hump are called _____ or _____ camels.

Camels with two humps are called _____ camels.

4. How long can a camel live?
 - a. up to 5 decades
 - b. up to 5 centuries
 - c. up to 5 millennia
 - d. up to 5 generations

5. Which sentence is an opinion?
 - a. A camel's hump can weigh as much as 80 pounds.
 - b. When camels reach temperatures over 106 ° F, they begin to sweat.
 - c. Besides their humps, camels have a lot of interesting features.
 - d. Bactrian camels live in Central and East Asia.

Now Try This: Make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast Bactrian camels and Dromedary camels.

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One Hump or Two?

Vocabulary Activity



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. ___ ___ v i r ___ ___ ___ e n ___ _____
hint: the place where a person or animal lives

2. ___ u r v ___ ___ a ___ _____
hint: ability to live

3. ___ v a p ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ s _____
hint: liquid dries up and becomes a gas

4. ___ s i ___ _____
hint: largest continent in the world

5. n ___ ___ ___ ___ i l s _____
hint: openings on the nose that allow air to enter the body

6. ___ o n c e ___ ___ r ___ ___ e d _____
hint: gathered in one place

7. ___ e m ___ e ___ a t u ___ ___ _____
hint: measurement of heat

ANSWER KEY

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1. What is a camel's hump used for? **b**
 - a. to store water
 - b. **to store fat**
 - c. to store food
 - d. to carry riders
2. How does the color of a camel's coat help it to survive in the desert?

The light color reflects sunlight, keeping the camel cool.

3. Fill in the blank lines.

Camels with one hump are called **Dromedary** or **Arabian** camels.

Camels with two humps are called **Bactrian** camels.

4. How long can a camel live? **a**
 - a. **up to 5 decades**
 - b. up to 5 centuries
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5. Which sentence is an opinion?
 - a. A camel's hump can weigh as much as 80 pounds.
 - b. When camels reach temperatures over 106 ° F, they begin to sweat.
 - c. **Besides their humps, camels have a lot of interesting features.**
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Now Try This: Make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast Bactrian camels and Dromedary camels.

ANSWER KEY

One Hump or Two?

Vocabulary Activity



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. e n v i r o n m e n t environment
hint: the place where a person or animal lives
2. s u r v i v a l survival
hint: ability to live
3. e v a p o r a t e s evaporates
hint: liquid dries up and becomes a gas
4. A s i a Asia
hint: largest continent in the world
5. n o s t r i l s nostrils
hint: openings on the nose that allow air to enter the body
6. c o n c e n t r a t e d concentrated
hint: gathered in one place
7. t e m p e r a t u r e temperature
hint: measurement of heat