

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Unusual Aardvark

By Guy Belleranti

If you've ever read Marc Brown's picture books, you know about a fictional aardvark named Arthur. But have you ever wondered what a real-life aardvark is like? They're found in Africa, and they really don't look much like the characters in Marc Brown's books.



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claws on its feet to dig into termite mounds and animals. It also strips up the insects with its long, sticky tongue. The aardvark can even shut its nostrils to keep both the biting insects and dust out. The animal's thick skin also provides protection from insect bites.

Unlike anteaters, the adult aardvark does have some teeth. But they're not the teeth of most mammals. They have no canines or incisors, only molar cheek-teeth.



While the aardvark does occasionally warm itself in the sun, it is primarily nocturnal. When night falls it comes out of its burrow using its great sense of smell to find an insect dinner.

The aardvark digs many burrows in its home range, using them as places to

sleep and hide. When it abandons a burrow, other animals such as squirrels, porcupines, hares, monitor lizards, or birds often move in.

The aardvark's long, tubular ears can rotate to help it listen for predators like leopards, lions, cheetahs, hyenas, and wild dogs. Some people also hunt the animal.

Its best defense is to quickly dig and hide in a burrow. An aardvark can also use its tail as a club and



**An aardvark uses its strong claws to quickly dig burrows, where it can sleep or hide.**



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1. On which continent do aardvarks live?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Complete the graphic organizer.

Three Ways a Pig's Body and an Aardvark's Body Are Similar



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3. An aardvark can shut its nostrils. Explain how this helps it survive.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do aardvarks dig burrows?

- a. so they can find water
- b. so they can find food underground
- c. so they have a safe place to hide from predators
- d. all of the above

5. Name five predators of the aardvark.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ fictional

a. long and round



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5. \_\_\_\_\_ porcupines

e. heavy stick used as a weapon

6. \_\_\_\_\_ hares

f. not real; made-up

7. \_\_\_\_\_ tubular

g. leaves

8. \_\_\_\_\_ club

h. not often, but sometimes



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5. Name five predators of the aardvark.

**Five predators of the aardvark are leopards, lions, cheetahs,  
hyenas, and wild dogs**

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