Last night Tommy saw a skunk. It was behind his house. It was looking through the garbage cans.

Tommy was scared. He asked his mom if the skunk would spray him.

His mom explained that skunks are known for spraying foul odors. Foul means yucky. She also said that there is no need to worry because skunks rarely use their spray. In fact, a skunk may never spray its whole life. Skunks are actually shy animals. They will only spray if you bother them.

If you do bother a skunk, it will give you some warning signs. It will lift its tail and arch its back. It will try to look bigger. Sometimes it will stomp its feet. If you continue to bother the skunk, it will turn around and shoot its spray. The spray can go very far. It can go up to 10 feet away! The spray is very smelly. It can also sting the animal or person’s eyes.

The skunk does not mean to hurt people or animals. The spray is just its way of protecting itself. When Tommy learned all of these facts about skunks, he was relieved.
Skunk Alert
by Lydia Lukidis

1. What is the main reason a skunk will use its spray?
   a. He wants to keep bugs away.
   b. He wants to attract a female skunk.
   c. He will only spray when he feels hungry.
   d. He will only spray when he feels threatened.

2. According to the article, what does a skunk's spray do besides make a smelly odor? (Use a complete sentence.)

   ~ PREVIEW ~

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3. Put a check mark (✓) next to the warning signs a skunk gives before it uses its spray.

   □ makes a barking noise  □ stomps its feet
   □ lifts its tail and arches its back  □ shows its teeth
   □ makes itself look bigger  □ crouches to the ground
Skunk Alert
by Lydia Lukidis

Fill in the missing letters to create words from the story.

Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. r ___ r ___ l y
   clue: not occurring very often

2. s ___ i n ___

3. o ___ o ___ s
   clue: very strong or unpleasant smells

4. r e l ___ e ___ e d
   clue: no longer fearful of something

5. a ___ ___ h
   clue: to make something curved, such as one's back
In the article, “Skunk Alert,” you learned many fascinating facts about skunks.

On the lines below, describe how you would react if you saw a skunk nearby, like Tommy did in the article. How do you think reading this article about skunks may cause you to react differently if you saw one?
1. What is the main reason a skunk will use its spray? **d.**
   - a. He wants to keep bugs away.
   - b. He wants to attract a female skunk.

2. According to the article, what does a skunk's spray do besides make a smelly odor? (Use a complete sentence.)
   - A skunk's spray can also sting people's or animals' eyes.

3. Put a check mark (✓) next to the warning signs a skunk gives before it uses its spray.
   - lifts its tail and arches its back
   - shows its teeth
   - makes itself look bigger
   - makes a barking noise
   - stomps its feet
   - crouches to the ground

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Skunk Alert
by Lydia Lukidis

Fill in the missing letters to create words from the story.

Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. rarel
   clue: not occurring very often
   filled in: rarely

2. sting
   clue: cause a painful, burning feeling, such as in the eyes
   filled in: sting

3. odor
   clue: very strong or unpleasant smells
   filled in: odors

4. relieved
   clue: no longer fearful of something
   filled in: relieved

5. arch
   clue: to make something curved, such as one’s back
   filled in: arch

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