Reptile With Horns

by Guy Belleranti

In desert and semi-arid areas of Guatemala, Mexico, the western United States, and parts of Canada lives an interesting animal called the horned lizard.

Because the horned lizard has a wide toad-like shape some people call it a horny toad. However, it's not really a toad at all. Toads are amphibians. The horned lizard is a reptile.



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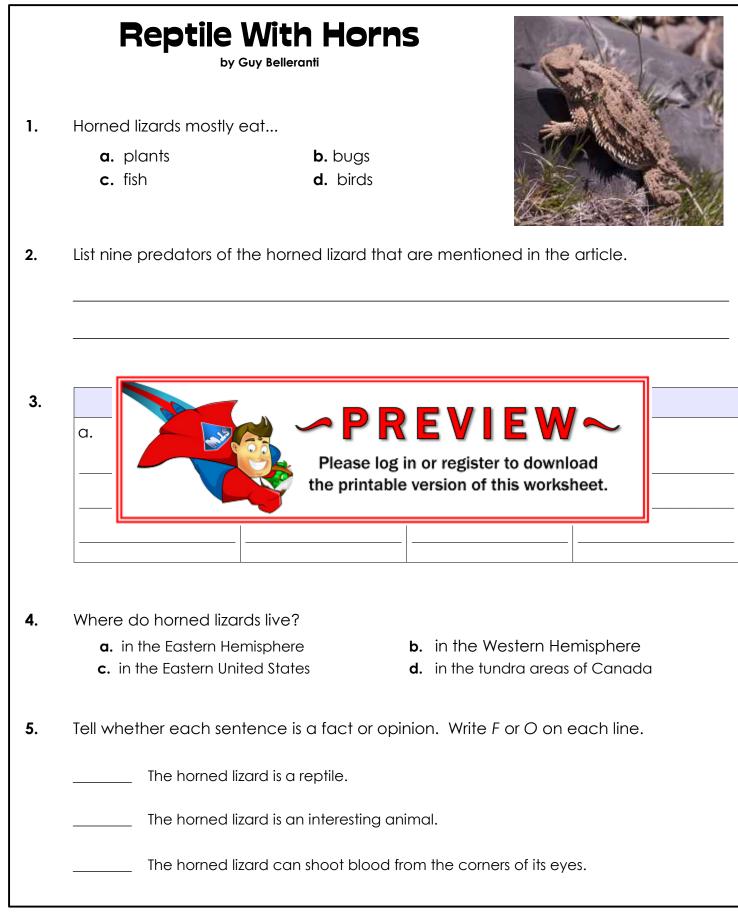
These horns



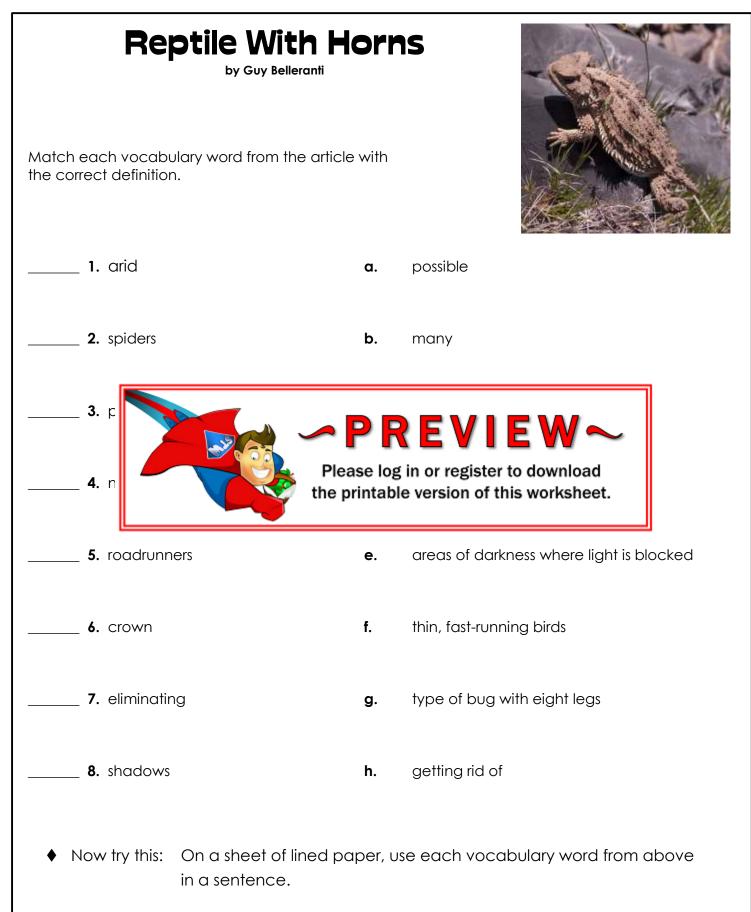
scales on its back, sides and tail.

Predators of the horned lizard include large birds, such as hawks and roadrunners. Mammals such as coyotes, foxes, wolves, cats and dogs also hunt the horned lizard. Reptiles, such as snakes and large lizards pose a threat as well.

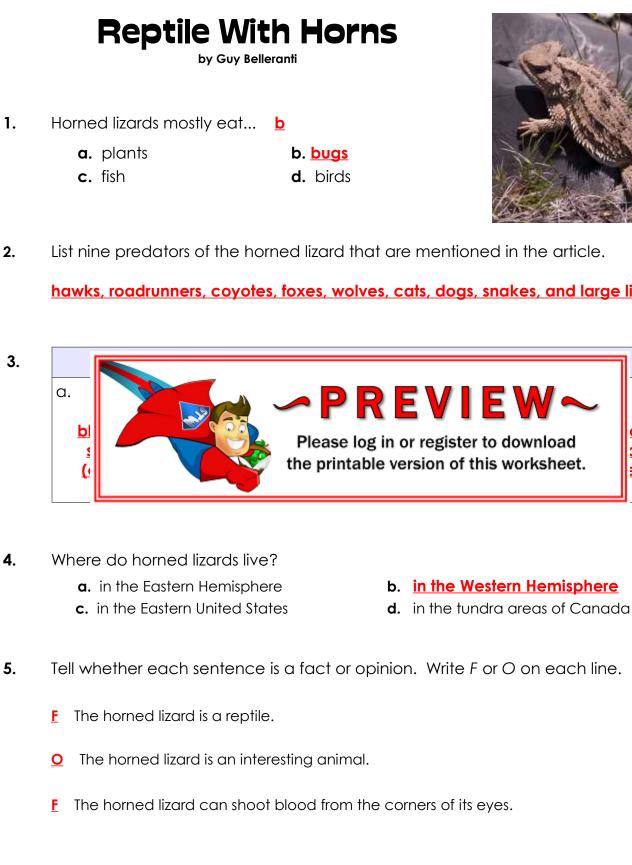
In addition to its spiky body and horned head the lizard also uses other ways to protect itself. One is camouflage. The animal's color patterns help it blend in with the soil of its habitat. It also can flatten against the ground, eliminating shadows and the chance it might be seen. In addition, a horned lizard can inflate itself with air so it looks like a big spiny balloon. And finally, some species can shoot blood from the corners of their eyes! This startles and scares off predators. The blood also has a taste that coyotes, dogs, foxes, wolves and cats don't like.



Name:



ANSWER KEY



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List nine predators of the horned lizard that are mentioned in the article.

hawks, roadrunners, coyotes, foxes, wolves, cats, dogs, snakes, and large lizards

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