

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

# Skunks

by Cynthia Sherwood

P-U! That might be what you think when you hear the word "skunk." But there is much more to this little creature than just its stinky smell when it sprays.



Skunks are mammals that live in many places in North America. All are black and white, but some have stripes and others have spots. Most are the size of a cat. Some live mainly in the country, while others live in cities. But you probably do not see skunks very often. They are "nocturnal," meaning they are active at night while you are asleep.

Skunks eat a variety of foods. Their main diet is insects, including underground bugs called "grubs" that are considered pests. So skunks can be helpful to have around.

You may not feel that way, though, if you ever get sprayed by a skunk. The spray is a thick, yellowish-green liquid that can travel fifteen feet! But skunks do not want to make you stinky. They are usually quite shy and only spray to keep their enemies away.

Skunks also warn you first. If you ever see one hiss, click its teeth, or stamp its front feet, run away fast! The skunk is getting ready to spray. And if it does, you know what that means—P-U!

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1. List three facts you learned about skunks.

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2. What does the word *nocturnal* mean?

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3. Complete the table.

Warning Signs a Skunk Might Give Before It Sprays		
1.	2.	3.

4. According to the article, how can skunks be helpful to people?

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5. What is the genre of this article?

- a.** science fiction                      **b.** non-fiction  
**c.** fiction                                      **d.** fantasy

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Use some of the facts in the article to write a creative poem about skunks.

\_\_\_\_\_

(title)

by \_\_\_\_\_

(your name)

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

## ANSWER KEY

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1. List three facts you learned about skunks.

**Answers will vary. Possible answers may include:**

**Most skunks are about the size of a cat.**

**Some skunks have stripes, while others have spots.**

**Skunks can live in the country or in the city.**

2. What does the word *nocturnal* mean?

**Nocturnal means active at night.**

3. Complete the table.

Warning Signs a Skunk Might Give Before It Sprays		
1. <b><u>hissing</u></b>	2. <b><u>stamping its front feet</u></b>	3. <b><u>clicking its teeth</u></b>

4. According to the article, how can skunks be helpful to people?

**Skunks can eat insects, such as grubs.**

5. What is the genre of this article?

- b**
- a. science fiction                      b. **non-fiction**  
c. fiction                                      d. fantasy