

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

# Tiger Talk

by Guy Belleranti

Tigers are the largest of all cats. They're also one of the most endangered. Let's learn more about these beautiful animals.

Like other wild cats (except African lions), tigers are solitary animals. The only time they aren't alone is when they mate or when a mother cares for her young.

The tiger mother gives birth to two, three, or sometimes even more, cubs. Each cub



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cubs are ready to set out on their own.

The tiger is famous for its stripes. These stripes aren't just for looks, however. They help the cat blend in with the grasses and trees. This helps the tiger stalk prey on its nighttime hunts.

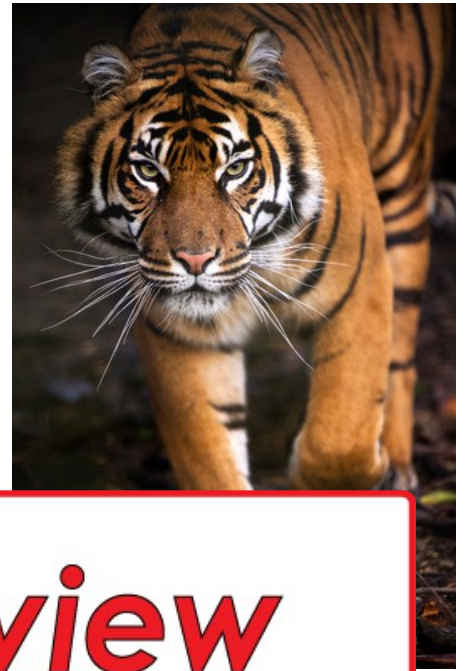
What does a tiger hunt? Large animals like deer, water buffalo, wild pigs, and antelope. Tigers eat smaller animals, too, and even hunt leopards, bears, and young elephants and rhinos. When close enough, the cat rushes and leaps, biting the animal's neck or throat with its powerful jaws. The tiger eats as much as it can and then either drags away the rest or covers it with dirt and grass. It returns over the next few days to eat more.

Sadly, the number of these amazing cats left in the wild continues to shrink. One hundred years ago, nine tiger subspecies and 100,000 tigers roamed rainforests, snow forests,

evergreen forests, swamps, and grasslands in Asia. However, poaching, habitat destruction, and other human activities made three of those subspecies extinct. A fourth subspecies only exists in a small number of zoos. Meanwhile, studies indicate that the combined wild population of the other five subspecies is fewer than 5,000.

A couple other tiger facts:

- Each tiger's stripes are unique, just like your fingerprints. The stripes aren't just in the tiger's



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Guy Belleranti is an author of fiction, poetry, articles, puzzles, and humor for children and adults. He also works as a docent at the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences teaching children about the wild animals at the zoo.

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1. You are exploring the jungles of southeast Asia, and you hope to see some animals. Which animal are you more likely to see, an antelope or a tiger? Explain why.

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3. Name one important lesson that tiger cubs learn during playtime when they are growing up.

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4. Approximately how many tigers have disappeared from the wild since their numbers were recorded 100 years ago?

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5. Name one threat to the remaining population of wild tigers.

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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. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ b \_\_\_ p e \_\_\_ i e \_\_\_

**hint:** a smaller group within a species

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_ o \_\_\_ i t \_\_\_ r \_\_\_

**hint:** living alone

\_\_\_\_\_



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5. a \_\_\_ \_\_\_ e l \_\_\_ \_\_\_ e

**hint:** a deer-like animal found in Africa and Asia

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_ w \_\_\_ \_\_\_ p s

**hint:** low-lying areas where water collects; marshes

\_\_\_\_\_

7. e \_\_\_ \_\_\_ a n \_\_\_ e \_\_\_ e d

**hint:** at risk of becoming extinct

\_\_\_\_\_

8. h a \_\_\_ i \_\_\_ a \_\_\_

**hint:** an area where an animal lives

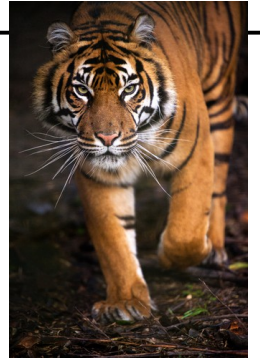
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In the article, "Tiger Talk", you learned many interesting facts about the beautiful and powerful tiger.

Based on what you learned in the article, what are some reasons why it's difficult, and even dangerous, to be a tiger?



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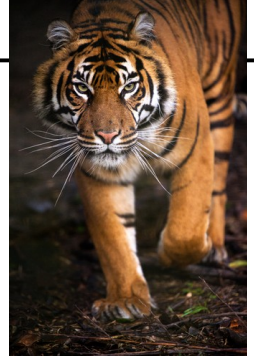
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## ANSWER KEY



# Tiger Talk

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1. You are exploring the jungles of southeast Asia, and you hope to see some animals. Which animal are you more likely to see, an antelope or a tiger? Explain why.

You are more likely to see an antelope because tigers are very endangered and are therefore rare.

2.

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3.

4.

5.



## ANSWER KEY

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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. s u b s p e c i e s

subspecies

**hint:** a smaller group within a species

2.

3.

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4.

5.

6.

7.



8. h a b i t a t

habitat

**hint:** an area where an animal lives