

READ THE PASSAGE

Think about the main idea of the passage. Picture the important details in your mind.

A Frog with . . . Claws?

Animals have many ways of defending themselves. Some use poison or bad smells. Others hide or use camouflage to keep from being seen. But one animal with a really weird defense is the hairy frog. This tiny frog lives in Central Africa and has hair-like strands on the lower part of its body. But the strangest part about this frog is its claws!

When the hairy frog is threatened, it will break the biggest of the three toe bones in each of its feet. The broken bone then juts out of the skin as a type of "claw." It looks like a small thorn on the bottom of the frog's foot. But this claw isn't the same as the claw on a cat or dog. It is made of bone instead of keratin (KARE-uh-tin), the material that animal claws and your fingernails are made of. Also, the hairy frog can't pull its claws back into the skin like most animals can. Instead, the skin and bone slowly heal.

The hairy frog isn't the only amphibian to use its bones as a weapon. The ribbed newt can cause its sharp ribs to poke out through its skin. To make things worse, the ribs are covered in poison! So, hungry fish or birds looking for a quick snack get a painful poke in the mouth instead. Who knew such tiny creatures could be so dangerous?

SKILL PRACTICE

Read the item. Write your response.

1. How does the hairy frog's claws differ from a dog's claws?

2. Describe how the ribbed newt defends itself.

3. Write the main idea of the last paragraph in your own words.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

On a separate piece of paper, sketch the foot of a hairy frog as you visualized it from the passage.