

READ THE PASSAGE Look for important details about the spiny anteater.

Quite a Creature

A Strange Mammal

An echidna (ee-KID-nuh) is a spiny anteater. It belongs to a group of mammals called monotremes (MON-oh-treemz). This means it can lay eggs!

An echidna mother lays one egg. She warms it in a pouch on her stomach. A baby hatches around ten days later. It's called a puggle (PUHG-uhl). It's about the size of a jelly bean. Once the puggle grows spines, it's sent out of the pouch!

All Nose and Tongue

The echidna eats ants and termites. It pokes its long, thin snout into ant nests and termite homes. Then its long, sticky tongue reaches into the nest. The bugs stick to the tongue like gum to a shoe. Grains of dirt stick to the tongue, too. But the dirt is not a problem. An echidna does not have teeth. The dirt does the work of teeth and grinds the bugs so they can be swallowed.

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. How does a monotreme differ from most mammals?

2. Why does a pronunciation in parentheses immediately follow some of the words?

3. What illustration could improve this text? How would it help readers?

STRATEGY PRACTICE Discuss with a partner how the subheads help you notice what is important.