



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2012**

**Grade 7
Reading**

Reading

Because the work on the assembly line is so tedious, employees often fall asleep.

- 1 What does the word tedious mean as it is used in the box?
- A. marvelous
 - B. mysterious
 - C. miraculous
 - D. monotonous

Use the definitions below to answer the question.

fiery *adj* 1. full of fire, glaring, intensely hot
2. feverish, burning, inflamed 3. enthusiastic
4. hotheaded, easily angered, excitable

- 2 Which is the **best** definition of the word fiery as it is used in this sentence?

Bruce's fiery retort led to a bitter feud with little hope of settlement.

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

Read this passage about keeping amphibians and reptiles as pets. Then answer the questions that follow.

Amphibians and Reptiles as Exotic Pets

Sheryl Fink and Bonnie Beresford

What is a Herp?

- 1 The word *herp* is derived from the Greek word *herpeton*, meaning “crawling things.” In modern usage, it refers to two major classes of animals: amphibians and reptiles. The study of these animals is called “herpetology.”

Amphibians you may know include frogs, toads, and salamanders. They usually lay unshelled eggs in water. Young amphibians look completely different from their parents. Many have gills and live in the water after hatching, and gradually change into their adult forms through a process called **metamorphosis**. Even though some adult amphibians live on land, they must remain moist at all times. To do this, their skin produces a slimy coating of mucus to keep it from drying out.

Reptiles include snakes, lizards, alligators, turtles, and tortoises. Reptile development is very different from that of amphibians. Reptile eggs have shells and, when they hatch, baby reptiles look like miniature versions of their parents. Reptiles have scales that cover their dry skin and, contrary to what many people think, they are not slimy!

- 4 Both amphibians and reptiles are **ectothermic**, meaning that they rely on the external environment for heat and their internal body temperature matches that of the air or water around them. In contrast, humans, other mammals, and birds are **endothermic**, meaning that they can keep their internal body temperature high and relatively constant, no matter what the temperature is outside.

Herps as Exotic Pets

If you’ve ever thought about getting an exotic pet, you may have imagined yourself showing it off to your friends, perhaps even walking around school with a lizard perched on your shoulder or a snake draped around your neck. You may have

been told that amphibians and reptiles don’t cost very much, that they are easier to care for than other animals, and that they stay small all their lives. Sounds like a great pet, right? Well, it’s not as easy as it sounds. Keeping a herp—or any exotic pet—is a huge commitment, and one for which owners must be prepared! Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding about keeping amphibians and reptiles as pets. Let’s look at some of the popular myths:

Myth #1: Herps make cheap pets.

Many people think herps make good pets because they are cheap. These people get a big surprise when they find out that the cost of the animal is the cheapest part of owning an exotic pet. On top of the cost of the animal itself is the initial cost of the enclosure (and, as the animal grows, more than one may be needed), furnishings, materials to cover the bottom, lighting equipment, heating equipment, cleaning equipment, and other supplies. So that \$10 baby lizard may actually cost you \$250 or more, and a \$5 frog can cost \$75–\$100 . . . and that’s just to get started! Don’t forget the ongoing costs such as food, electricity for heating and lights, and veterinary care. So, while the animal itself may not cost much, caring for it properly will.

Myth #2: Herps are easy to care for.

Well, that may be what the clerk in the pet store tells you, but in many cases, herps end up being MORE work than other pets!

All amphibians and reptiles, even those born in captivity, are wild animals. When we try to keep herps—or any wild animal—in captivity, we are putting them in a situation that is very different from their natural environment. Herps are highly specialized animals, with very specific

environmental and dietary needs, and how successfully they are kept in captivity largely depends on how well we are able to imitate natural conditions. It takes a great deal of time, money, and effort to create a suitably sized enclosure with the right temperature, light, and humidity, and to provide the variety of food, water sources, stimulation, and shelter that an animal needs to stay healthy. And, like any other pet, herps need regular observation and veterinary care.

Anyone considering an exotic pet must be prepared for the daily routine of preparing food, cleaning and disinfecting the enclosure, checking the water, checking the temperature, watching the animal's health, handling it (if appropriate), getting pooped on, remembering to close and lock the enclosure, spending your entire allowance on lighting and heating and food supplies, and then blowing your savings on emergency veterinary care because your exotic pet got sick in spite of all your efforts. You get the picture . . . herps are anything but easy to care for!

For more information on the needs of amphibians and reptiles in captivity, visit <http://www.ifaw.org/exoticpets>.

Myth #3: Herps don't live for very long.

The only reason many amphibians and reptiles don't live very long in captivity is because they are not adequately cared for. When they are taken care of properly, captive herps can live long lives. Many frogs, lizards and snakes can live 10 to 20 years, and tortoises can live well over 100 years! So anyone considering a pet herp must be prepared to care for the animal over its entire life. If you are planning on going to college, you may not be able to take your pet with you. Who will take care of it then?

Myth #4: Herps stay small and will only grow to the size of their enclosure.

While this might seem convenient, it often isn't true. People will often buy enclosures that are too small for their pet, hoping the animal will stay small for its entire life. But when properly cared for, reptiles grow . . . and they can grow LARGE. For example, a six-inch baby iguana (*Iguana iguana*) may grow up to be a six-foot adult requiring an enclosure the size of a walk-in closet. A two-inch sulcata tortoise (*Geochelone sulcata*) hatchling that fits in the palm of your hand will grow up to weigh over 100 pounds. It is cruel and inhumane to house an animal in an enclosure that is too small. It can cause severe stress leading to illness and behavioral problems. Pets that are kept in an enclosure that is too small will spend most of their time trying to escape, often injuring themselves in the process.

- 3 Which statement is true about all ectothermic animals?
- A. Their body temperatures change with the environment.
 - B. They are born in water but live on land.
 - C. Their babies hatch from hard-shelled eggs.
 - D. They have unusually long lives for wild animals.

- 4 In paragraph 4, the word external means
- A. living.
 - B. inactive.
 - C. weakened.
 - D. outside.

- 5 In paragraphs 1 through 4, some words are in **bold** print because they
- A. are titles.
 - B. are explained.
 - C. begin new sections.
 - D. come from another language.

- 6 What does **Myth #3** include that the other myths do not include?
- A. a reminder that owners should treat a herp just as they would any other pet
 - B. encouragement to think creatively about how to care for a herp as it ages
 - C. advice against getting a herp because it is a long-term responsibility
 - D. advice against getting a herp because of ongoing health problems

- 7 Explain how each **myth** about herps is incorrect. Use information from the passage to support your answer.

- 8 According to the passage, the cheapest part of owning a herp as a pet is the cost of
- A. the food.
 - B. the equipment.
 - C. the animal itself.
 - D. the veterinary care.

- 9 In **Myth #4**, the word inhumane means
- A. brutal.
 - B. confident.
 - C. ordinary.
 - D. ignorant.

- 10 According to the passage, why is the size of a herp's enclosure important?
- A. Small enclosures may help herps feel safe.
 - B. Enclosures that are too small may lead to injuries.
 - C. Large enclosures may prevent herps from fighting.
 - D. Enclosures that are too large may encourage escape.

- 11 Which sentence from the passage contains an **opinion**?
- A. "Reptiles have scales that cover their dry skin and, contrary to what many people think, they are not slimy!"
 - B. "So, while the animal itself may not cost much, caring for it properly will."
 - C. "You get the picture . . . herps are anything but easy to care for!"
 - D. "But when properly cared for, reptiles grow . . . and they can grow LARGE."

- 12 Explain why the author suggests that having a herp is "a huge commitment." Use information from the passage to support your answer.

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