

Stacy and the Orangutans

Stacy rushed in her house and went straight to her mom's office. "Mom! I need your signature. We're going on a field trip to the San Diego Zoo."

"That sounds fascinating." Mom jotted her signature on the paper and gave it back to Stacy.

The class handed in their consent forms to Ms. Lee the next day. "We're all set, class. Please be here by 8:00 on Friday."

Friday morning the class stood online to get onto the bus. "I can't wait to get there!" said Stacy to her best friend Julia. "Ever since we talked about orangutans in class I wanted to see one close up."

"Me too," said Julia. "It's so sad that they're critically endangered. It would be horrible if they disappeared forever."

On the bus, the kids talked about all the animals they'd see. Finally, the bus pulled up to the zoo. "Okay, class, stay together," said Ms. Lee. "Parents, please keep your eyes on your group."

After visiting the elephants, the tigers, and the giraffes, Stacy got impatient. "Ms. Lee, when will we get to the orangutan exhibit?"

"That's next, Stacy. That's the exhibit I've been waiting for too." Just around the bend, they came to the orangutans.

"Whoa," said Stacy. "They're bigger than I thought, and their fur is really reddish!"

"Yes," said Ms. Lee. "The males can grow to almost five feet and weigh up to 190 pounds. They're called 'people of the forest' because they live in tropical and swamp forests."

Stacy got as close to the railing as she could. "I know. I've been studying up on them. Did you know that their arms are a lot longer than their legs? That's why they look like they're walking on all fours when they're on the ground."

"Yeah," joined in Julia. "And did you know that since 1928, there have been 30 orangutan births at this zoo?"

One of the zoo staff members had been listening to the class. "Hi, everyone. I'm Joe. These amazing animals are also very clever. We had a Bornean orangutan named Ken Allen who would escape all the time. He'd unscrew bolts with his fingers, and one time he stretched around to unlatch the door. He even climbed a very steep incline near the back of his enclosure to sneak over the wall. He was amazing."

“Wow!” said Stacy. “He must have hated it here.”

“Oh, no,” said Joe. “The orangutan is a very clever animal. He just liked the challenge of escaping. He happily went back to his enclosure every time we caught him. He sure was a character.”

Stacy furrowed her brows and looked at the amazing creatures before her. “How can we help protect them from extinction?”

“Well,” said Joe. “The major problem is that companies are cutting down the trees of the orangutan habitats. This is called logging. They do this to either grow palm trees for palm oil or to use the trees for paper or wood products. You can help protect them by telling others about the problems of the orangutan, and you can conserve and recycle wood.”

Stacy’s face lit up. “Hey, we can help save the orangutan!” she yelled to her class. “I’m going to do my part, and I’m going to let others know how they can help too! How about you?”

Questions

1. What are orangutans sometimes called?
2. What is logging?
3. What was one interesting thing that Ken Allen did?
4. What is a way that you and Stacy can help the orangutans?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. jotted
2. endangered
3. impatient
4. exhibit
5. incline
6. furrowed
7. extinction
8. conserve

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "Mom **jotted** her signature on the paper"

- a. wrote; scribbled b. read; examined c. erased or removed d. shook or fluttered

2. "'It's so sad that they're critically **endangered**'"

- a. risky; scary b. alone or isolated c. in danger or dying out; threatened d. unusual; different

3. "After visiting the elephants, the tigers, and the giraffes, Stacy got **impatient**"

- a. excited; delighted b. unwilling to wait; restless c. curious or interested d. sick or ill

4. "'That's the **exhibit** I've been waiting for too.'"

- a. time of day b. speaker or teacher c. display for viewing d. snack or light meal

5. "'He even climbed a very steep **incline** near the back of his enclosure'"

- a. slope or ramp b. fence; wall c. pole or post d. leafy fruit tree

6. "Stacy **furrowed** her brows and looked at the amazing creatures before her"

- a. wiped or rubbed b. covered; hid c. slapped; hit d. wrinkle or puckered

7. "'How can we help protect them from **extinction**?'"

- a. starvation or hunger b. destruction; elimination c. escaping; leaving d. bad weather

8. "'you can **conserve** and recycle wood'"

- a. buy or purchase b. grow; produce c. use carefully; save d. learn about or discover