

19 Vomit Defense

While giant petrel parents scavenge for food, their chick sits alone in her nest on the pebbly shore of Antarctica. A large bird called a skua may hop over to the nest and try to eat the chick. But the chick quickly spews an acidic vomit all over the hungry skua. The smelly acid eats away at the skua's feathers. The stunned skua flies off in search of easier prey.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the chick *spewed vomit* on the skua? Why not fight him?

Do you think the chick could repel many predators at once? Why or why not?

Why do you think the skua flies away in search of easier prey?

Do you think the skua ever comes back? Why or why not?



26 Jelly Invaders

Off the coast of Australia, swarms of spotted jellyfish clung to the bottom of a large ship. White dots covered these blue-colored jellyfish, which were the size of a human fist. The ship traveled across the sea to the Gulf of Mexico. In the Gulf, the jellyfish devoured many fish and even clogged fishing nets. Since the jellyfish ate so much, each grew to the size of a dinner plate!

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Do you think the jellyfish could have arrived in the Gulf of Mexico without clinging to a ship? Why or why not?

Do you think there was more food for the jellyfish in Australia or the Gulf? Explain.

What might happen if the jellyfish ate all the fish in the Gulf?

Why do you think the title calls the jellyfish "invaders"?

27 Thrashing a King Snake

A thrasher bird protected her nest of eggs from a king snake. The long black snake slithered up a prickly cactus toward the bird's nest at the top. Perched on a nearby cactus pad, the bird spotted the snake nearing the nest and flapped her wings wildly. Then she fiercely pecked at the snake with her thin curved beak. The snake lost his balance and fell to a lower cactus pad where he dangled for a few seconds before dropping to the ground.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the king snake slithered toward the nest?

Why do you think the thrasher bird attacked the snake?

What might have happened if the bird did not see the snake?

What do you think the snake did next?

36 Reptile Wrestling

An alligator and a python fought to the death in a Florida swamp. Hidden by tall reeds, the large snake glided through the murky water toward the alligator. Suddenly the snake wrapped his body around the alligator and squeezed. The alligator thrashed back and forth, and bit down hard on the snake's body. The alligator held tight and the injured snake slowly unwound. Then the alligator swam away with the snake dangling from his jaws.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the python hid in the tall reeds?

Why do you think the python wrapped its body around the alligator?

What might have happened if the alligator did not bite the snake's body?

What do you think the alligator did with the snake?

37 Waving an Octopus

A diver carries a dead octopus as he searches for lobster. The man dives along the rocky sea floor, where a lobster hides in a small rocky cave. He spots the lobster and waves the limp octopus in front of the cave's opening. Seeing the octopus, the startled lobster darts out of the cave. In the open water, the man easily grabs the lobster's body. Then the man swims back to the surface and tosses the lobster onto his boat.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the man uses a *dead* octopus? Why not a live one?

Octopuses often eat lobsters. Why do you think the lobster darts out of the cave?

Do you think the lobster knows the octopus is dead? Why or why not?

What might happen if the lobster stayed in the cave?

45 The Monster Turtle

The alligator snapping turtle lives on the banks of a large river. This turtle can weigh hundreds of pounds and is the largest freshwater turtle in North America. Large spikes cover the turtle's brown and green shell and long thick tail. Holding his breath, he dives to the bottom of the river. Green algae on the turtle's shell camouflaged him among the plants and rocks of the riverbed.

This snapping turtle uses his tongue to hunt fish. Sitting still on the riverbed, he opens his strong rigid beak to expose the tip of his tongue, which is shaped like a small pink worm. The turtle sticks this wiggling tip out into the water and waits for a fish to swim by his mouth. The fish darts over to the worm-like tongue and bites it. The turtle quickly snaps his beak shut and devours the fish.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think this turtle is called the *alligator snapping* turtle?

What might happen if this turtle had a brightly colored shell instead of a brown and green one?

Why do you think the turtle *sits still* as he waits for a fish to swim by?

Why do you think the turtle *quickly* snaps his jaws shut on the fish?

Why not slowly grab it?

Why do you think the title of the story is "The Monster Turtle"?

