

Blizzard Bag 5:

Grade 7:

Literature: Read the article on teenage animals and answer the questions that follow.

Writing: Summarize the article in your own words. Be sure to include its central idea and at least THREE pieces of evidence from the text that support this idea.

Even animal adolescence is filled with teen drama and peer pressure

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 12.11.19

Word Count **683**

Level **820L**



Image 1. Animals, even king penguins, have rocky adolescent periods, just as humans do. King penguins hang on the beach on February 12, 2016, on Volunteer Point in the Falkland Islands. Photo by: Jahi Chikwendiu/Washington Post tk

Ever heard of a moody teenage elephant? It turns out elephant adolescents share some behaviors with human teens. Cynthia Moss discovered this. She has studied elephants in Kenya for nearly 50 years.

"They're naive, they have a lot to learn and they make mistakes," Moss said.

This is particularly true for male elephants, she explained. Males learn that if they raid crops, they get speared and then they die. "It's just like young human males who drive too fast," she said.

Teenage Humans And Animals Face Danger On Purpose

These risky actions are the subject of a new book. It is called "Wildhood: The Epic Journey From Adolescence to Adulthood in Humans and Other Animals." It is written by Barbara Natterson-Horowitz, who studies the biological evolution, and Kathryn Bowers, a science journalist.

The authors show that adolescent animals and human teens go through similar challenges. An adolescent is a young person in their teens. They also find that these teen behaviors are very valuable to growing up for teens of all species.

Other scientists who have also studied this agree with their findings.

Natterson-Horowitz and Bowers write that human teens often put themselves in danger on purpose. This adolescent risk-taking is seen throughout the animal world.

This means that adolescence can be pretty dangerous for animals. This danger is present across species. For young animals that have big bodies but little life experience, there are higher chances of death. Natterson-Horowitz said this is because "they are easy prey."

The risky behaviors serve a purpose, Bowers said. Take, for example, a practice called "predator inspection." This is when animals approach predators rather than running away. The trade-off for the danger of getting close is that young animals watch, smell and learn about the predator. They gather all kinds of information that can keep them safer as adults.

Peer Pressure And Risky Behavior Go Hand-In-Hand

Another key aspect of adolescence is an increase in social behavior. Teens are often in groups. This period is marked by peak levels of peer pressure and near-disaster. Indeed, scientists have found that adolescents of all kinds act more dangerously with peers.

The idea that adolescents take risks because it is an instinct gives the behavior of human teens a new perspective.

Laurence Steinberg is a professor. He studies the mind. He found similarities between mice and human adolescent behavior when in groups. Both adolescent groups took more risks when they were around their peers.

These findings support what Steinberg says is another multi-species distinguishable trait of adolescents: the desire to socialize.

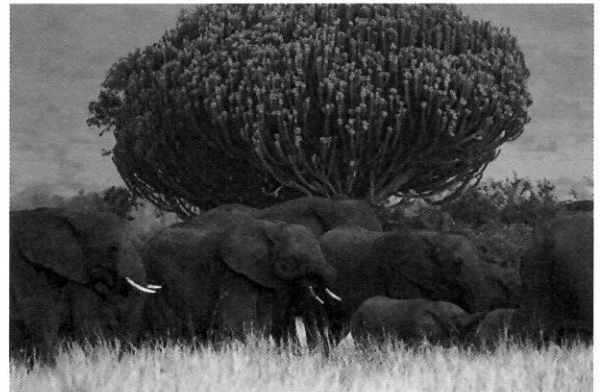
"For the most part, human adolescents like to be with other adolescents," Steinberg said. "Juveniles in other species like to be with other juveniles. If I say that teenagers are social animals, I think the word 'animal' is just as important in that sentence as the word 'social.'"

Authors Hope To Understand Human Teens Better

Dolphins fit that description, too. Ann Weaver has studied bottlenose dolphins. She's an animal behaviorist off the coast of St. Petersburg, Florida.

One time, she was on the ocean in a boat for three hours. "Almost all the dolphins we saw were small gangs of teens," Weaver said.

Weaver thinks dolphin teens and human teens are similar. "They are at their most physically fit, they're the strongest they're going to be and they do everything with exaggeration," she said.



The book argues that when you're a teen, you learn four basic skills. One of these skills is how to stay safe. Other skills are understanding social status and learning how to live as an adult.

While writing the book, the authors were raising a human teen in their homes. They wanted to understand teens in the wild. They hoped this would help them understand their own children. They hope the book will help other people who are raising teens.

Quiz

1 Read the section "Teenage Humans And Animals Face Danger On Purpose."

Select the paragraph from the section that shows how risk-taking can be helpful for teens.

- (A) These risky actions are the subject of a new book. It is called "Wildhood: The Epic Journey From Adolescence to Adulthood in Humans and Other Animals." It is written by Barbara Natterson-Horowitz, who studies the biological evolution, and Kathryn Bowers, a science journalist.
- (B) Natterson-Horowitz and Bowers write that human teens often put themselves in danger on purpose. This adolescent risk-taking is seen throughout the animal world.
- (C) This means that adolescence can be pretty dangerous for animals. This danger is present across species. For young animals that have big bodies but little life experience, there are higher chances of death. Natterson-Horowitz said this is because "they are easy prey."
- (D) The risky behaviors serve a purpose, Bowers said. Take, for example, a practice called "predator inspection." This is when animals approach predators rather than running away. The trade-off for the danger of getting close is that young animals watch, smell and learn about the predator. They gather all kinds of information that can keep them safer as adults.

2 Read the section "Peer Pressure And Risky Behavior Go Hand-In-Hand."

Which selection from this section supports the conclusion that teens take more risks in groups?

- (A) Another key aspect of adolescence is an increase in social behavior. Teens are often in groups.
- (B) Indeed, scientists have found that adolescents of all kinds act more dangerously with peers.
- (C) Laurence Steinberg is a professor. He studies the mind. He found similarities between mice and human adolescent behavior when in groups.
- (D) These findings support what Steinberg says is another multi-species distinguishable trait of adolescents: the desire to socialize.

3 What are the MAIN ideas developed in the article?

- (A) Teens of all species seem to behave similarly; teen behaviors can help them to learn important lessons.
- (B) Teens of all species seem to behave similarly; teen elephants can be moody just like human teens.
- (C) Teens of all species like to socialize with their peers; studies show teen mice act like human teens.
- (D) Teens of all species like to socialize with their peers; teens can often be seen hanging out in groups.

4 Read the paragraph from the article.

While writing the book, the authors were raising a human teen in their homes. They wanted to understand teens in the wild. They hoped this would help them understand their own children. They hope that the book will help other people who are raising teens.

HOW does this paragraph support the main idea of the article?

- (A) It explains why parents need help understanding their own teens.
- (B) It shows the reason why the authors wrote a book about teens in the wild.
- (C) It explains the four basic skills that teens learn when they are growing.
- (D) It shows how long it took the authors to write the book about teens in the wild.