

Who are the ama?

- 1 Some women in Japan have unusual jobs. They are pearl divers. They dive to the bottom of the sea for oysters. The pearls are inside the oysters' shells. These women are called *ama*. This means "women of the sea" in Japanese. Their mothers and grandmothers were divers before them. Some *ama* dive in shallow water. They are *kachido*. That means "walking people." Others go out to sea in boats. They dive in deeper water. These women are *funado*. That means "ship people."
- 2 *Ama* use just a few tools when they dive. They carry knives to cut the oysters from the rocks. *Ama* wear goggles over their eyes. They tie stones around themselves to make their bodies heavy. And they have a rope lifeline tied around them. But the *ama* do not have tanks of air. These women hold their breath under the water. Each time they dive, they stay down for a full minute. Then they tug on their lifelines, and someone pulls them up. *Ama* may dive 100 times each day.
- 3 The *ama* have been diving for about 2,000 years. But now city jobs look better than diving jobs to many young girls. They may not follow their mothers into the sea. This ancient job might come to an end.

Circle the right answer for questions 1–5. Write your answer to question 6 on a blank piece of paper.

1. The funado dive _____.
A in deeper water
B in shallow water
C 2,000 times a day
D for buried treasure
2. Which word in paragraph 2 means “pull hard”?
A carry
B dive
C cut
D tug
3. To help them sink to the bottom of the sea, ama _____.
A tie stones around themselves
B take deep breaths
C pull on a rope
D wear goggles
4. The article does not say, but you can decide that _____.
A ama don’t allow men to help them
B ama can’t swim well
C most ama are heavy
D ama have a hard job
5. Over can have the following meanings. Mark the meaning used in paragraph 2.
A ended
B larger than
C on top of
D above



6. What do you think you’d have to do to train to be an ama?

Does music charm snakes?

- 1 The snake charmer from India plays his flute. A cobra rises slowly from its basket. People stand back from the poisonous snake. The snake charmer keeps playing. His body moves back and forth. The snake moves with him. It seems to dance to the music. Does the music have the power to tame this dangerous animal?
- 2 This is all an act. And it's not as dangerous as it looks. For one thing, the snake's poison has been removed. The snake can't hear, either. So it isn't really dancing. The music is just to please the people watching the trick.
- 3 The snake would just as soon nap in its basket. With the flute, the charmer blows air onto the snake's back. This makes the animal rise. The snake thinks the flute might be an enemy. So it watches the flute and moves with it. But the charmer must keep the snake moving. He can't let it lose interest. If it does, it will sink back into its basket. Also, the charmer must not frighten the snake or it will try to get away.
- 4 The snake charmer's power over the snake doesn't come from his music. It comes from what he knows about snakes.

Circle the right answer for questions 1–5. Write your answer to question 6 on a blank piece of paper.

1. The snake moves back and forth because it _____.
A gets scared
B seeks the light
C likes the music
D follows the flute
2. Which word in paragraph 1 means “not wild”?
A flute
B forth
C tame
D power
3. Which paragraph tells why the snake isn’t dangerous?
A 1
B 2
C 3
D 4
4. The snake will sink back into its basket if it _____.
A gets hungry
B loses interest
C sees the flute
D gets frightened
5. *Sink* can have the following meanings. Mark the meaning used in paragraph 3.
A something to hold in water
B slope gradually
C grow weaker
D fall slowly

6. Which wild animal would you choose to have power over? Why?

What are the Mayan pyramids?

- 1 What picture does the word *pyramid* bring to mind? You probably think of ancient Egypt. But did you know that New World people built pyramids, too? The ancient Maya lived in what is now Central America. They built many great pyramids between A.D. 250 and 900.
- 2 Mayan pyramids are different from those in Egypt. Egyptian pyramids were tombs. Kings, queens, and other important people were buried in them. Some Mayan pyramids were tombs, too. But most were used for religious ceremonies. Priests would ask the gods for help in battle or with crops.
- 3 Mayan pyramids are between 100 and 200 feet high. They are not as tall as Egyptian pyramids. Steps go up the side. The Maya used them to climb up to the flat top. On the top of most Mayan pyramids is a small building. This is where the Maya held their religious ceremonies.
- 4 But Mayan pyramids are like Egyptian pyramids in some ways. They are made of huge blocks of stone. It took thousands of people many years to build each one. And both kinds of pyramids help people today learn about ancient people.

Circle the right answer for questions 1–5. Write your answer to question 6 on a blank piece of paper.

- Mayan pyramids are not as _____ as Egyptian pyramids.
A beautiful
B well built
C tall
D new
- Which word in paragraph 2 means "important acts done at special times"?
A kings
B tombs
C pyramids
D ceremonies
- Which paragraph tells how Mayan pyramids are like Egyptian pyramids?
A 1
B 2
C 3
D 4
- The article does not say, but you can decide that the Maya held religious gatherings on top of pyramids because _____.
A there was more sunlight there
B they wanted to be closer to the gods
C that was the only place that was flat
D they built the top of the pyramid before they built other parts
- Picture* can have the following meanings. Mark the meaning used in paragraph 1.
A design made by painting
B mental image
C situation
D movie




6. Think of the oldest building in your town. How is it used? How is it like and different from the Mayan pyramids?

feral animals?

- 1 Have you ever heard of feral (FIR•uhl) animals? Maybe you haven't. But you probably have seen some. Most feral animals are wild animals that used to be tame. Some of these animals were born feral.
- 2 Most feral animals are dogs or cats. Many were pets. But the owners got tired of them or moved. So they let the animals go. These owners just let their dogs and cats loose in the country or city.
- 3 What happens to these animals? The lucky ones find new owners to care for them. But most do not. They become wild. They eat garbage to stay alive. And they kill small wild animals or farm animals for food. Feral animals don't live very long. Most live less than two years. They get hungry or sick. Dogcatchers catch them, too. And some farmers poison them for killing their animals.
- 4 There are millions of feral animals. They are a danger to real wild animals. But there wouldn't be any feral animals if people found good homes for pets they no longer want. Then the animals would not have to turn wild to stay alive.

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Circle the right answer for questions 1–5. Write your answer to question 6 on a blank piece of paper.

1. The article does not tell how feral animals _____.
A learn to kill for food
B become wild
C sleep
D die
2. Which word in paragraph 4 means “something that can cause harm”?
A danger
B longer
C alive
D wild
3. Which paragraph tells how many feral animals there are?
A 1
B 2
C 3
D 4
4. Feral animals become wild mostly because _____.
A they ran away from home
B their owners let them go
C they lived on a farm
D they got sick
5. The article does not say, but you can decide that feral animals _____.
A live a long time
B find new homes fast
C have a very hard life
D are friendly to other animals

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6. Feral animals are a problem in many places—in cities, the suburbs, and the country. Write a letter to your city government. Give them two ideas of things they can do to help with the problem.

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