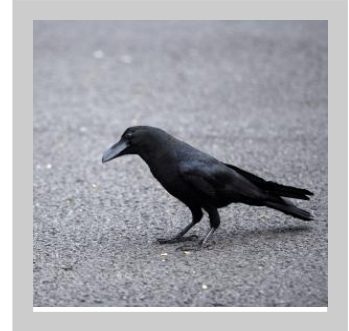


Name _____
Date _____

The American Crow

The American crow is one of approximately forty species of crows around the world. Their feathers are completely black, as are their legs, feet, and beaks. A group of crows is called a flock or a murder. They mate for life and form large families of up to 15 members. Offspring usually stay with their parents for four to five years and help raise their younger siblings.



The American crow has a unique call, a "caw-caw-caw." They usually nod their heads up and down while making this noise. In addition to their own call, crows can make many other sounds as well. They are able to imitate the sounds of other animals, including human words and the calls of other birds.

American crows are known for their intelligence. While humans are generally unable to tell crows apart, crows are able to recognize the facial features of individual humans. They are one of the few species of birds that are able to fashion their own tools. For example, crows can make "knives" out of sharp grasses and stiff leaves.

The American crow is an omnivore, and will feed on carrion (decaying flesh of dead animals), seeds, eggs, human food scraps, insects, vegetables, and grain. Crows actively hunt for small animals such as mice, nestlings, and frogs. In the winter, acorns and nuts are also part of a crow's diet.

1) According to information in paragraph 1, which of the following is true of the American crow?

- I. They are but one of many species of crow.
- II. They are black in color.
- III. Their families may include up to 15 members.

- A. I only
- B. I and II only
- C. II and III only
- D. I, II, and III

2) Based on information in paragraph 1, it can be understood that American crow families are large most likely because they

- A. have few predators
- B. are omnivorous
- C. have a long life expectancy
- D. stay with their families for years

- 3) The main purpose of paragraph 2 is to
- A. explain how the American crow is able to make so many noises
 - B. illustrate the American crow's ability to imitate human words
 - C. demonstrate the American crow's range of unique abilities
 - D. outline the various sounds the American crow is able to make
- 4) As used in paragraph 3, the word **fashion** most nearly means
- A. create
 - B. utilize
 - C. image
 - D. style
- 5) In paragraph 3, the author mentions "knives" in order to
- A. show how dangerous crows can be
 - B. exemplify the crow's intelligence
 - C. support the claim that crows are like humans
 - D. provide an example of a way crows hunt
- 6) Based on information in paragraph 4, we can understand that which of the following things could be included in the diet of an **omnivore**?
- I. chicken
 - II. lettuce
 - III. beetles
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

7) In which of the following locations would a crow be likely to find food that is part of its diet?

- I.** at a slaughter house
- II.** in a dumpster
- III.** on a farm

- A. I only
- B. I and II only
- C. II and III only
- D. I, II, and III

8) Choose another bird. Compare and contrast this bird to the American crow. If you do not know enough information about a bird, you can imagine that you have discovered a new species of bird and make up facts about it.

Answers and Explanations

1) D

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 1, the author writes, "The American crow is one of approximately forty species of crows around the world." This supports **option (I)**.

In paragraph 1, the author writes, "Their feathers are completely black, as are their legs, feet, and beaks." This supports **option (II)**.

In paragraph 1, the author writes, "They mate for life and form large families of up to 15 members." This supports **option (III)**.

Therefore **(D)** is correct.

2) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 1, the author states that crows "form large families of up to 15 members. Offspring usually stay with their parents for four or five years and help raise their younger siblings." This means that crow offspring stay with their families for years. This tendency of crows to stay with their families for extended periods of time is most likely to be responsible for their large families. This means **(D)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information about predators of crows. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

Although the author does say that crows are omnivores, this is not the reason why crow families are large. Moreover, this information is presented in paragraph 4, not paragraph 1. This makes **(B)** incorrect.

The passage does not provide information about the life expectancy of crows. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

3) D

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 2, the author outlines the various sounds the American crow can make. The author does this by first describing the American crow's own unique call. The author proceeds to tell us about the crow's ability to "imitate the sounds of other animals." This includes human words and

other bird calls. Since the author merely sketches, and does not discuss at length, the various sounds the American crow is able to make, we can understand that the main purpose of paragraph 2 is to outline the various sounds the American crow is able to make. This means **(D)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because the author simply tells us that the American crow can make these sounds. He or she does not actually explain how the crow does this.

The author merely mentions that the crow has the ability to imitate human words. He or she does not illustrate, or provide any detailed information about the crow's ability to do this. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Although the author does seem to believe that the American crow has unique abilities, this is not the main purpose of paragraph 2. This rules out choice **(C)**.

4) A

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

fashion (*verb*): to give a particular shape or form to; to make.

In paragraph 3, we learn that crows "fashion their own tools." The author goes on to say, "For example, crows can make 'knives' out of sharp grasses and stiff leaves." Since crows fashion tools, and the example given is that crows make knives, we can understand that the meaning of *fashion* in this instance is to make. Create is another word for make, so **(A)** is correct.

Utilize means to use. Although the crows do use the tools, what is significant here is that the birds can actually make the tools. This means **(B)** is incorrect.

The passage does not provide information to support choice **(C)**. Therefore it is incorrect.

Although *style* is a synonym for fashion in some contexts, this is not how fashion is used in paragraph 3. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

5) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

The author begins paragraph 3 by saying, "American crows are known for their intelligence." This lets us know the author plans to discuss the crow's intelligence in this paragraph. The author continues to provide examples to show how this is so. The first example involves the crow's ability to recognize facial features. The second example involves the crow's ability to make certain tools, such as "knives." Using this information, we can understand that the author mentions "knives" in paragraph 3 in order to exemplify the crow's intelligence. This means **(B)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

6) D

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

omnivore (*noun*): an animal whose normal diet includes both plants and animals.

In paragraph 4, we learn about the diet of a crow. The author writes, "The crow is an omnivore, and will feed on carrion (decaying flesh of dead animals), seeds, eggs, human food scraps, insects, vegetables, and grain. Crows actively hunt for small animals such as mice, nestlings, and frogs. In the winter, acorns and nuts are also part of a crow's diet." From this we can understand that meat (carrion, household scraps), vegetables, and insects are all foods that a crow, which is an *omnivore*, eats. Chicken is a meat, and omnivores eat meat. This supports **option (I)**.

Lettuce is a vegetable, and omnivores eat vegetables. This supports **option (II)**.

Insects are specifically listed as something the crow, an omnivore, would eat. Since beetles are insects, they could be included in the diet of an omnivore. This supports **option (III)**.

Therefore **(D)** is correct.

7) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

The diet of a crow is discussed in paragraph 4. The author states that "the crow is an omnivore, and will feed on carrion (decaying flesh of dead animals), seeds, eggs, human food scraps, insects, vegetables, and grain. Crows actively hunt for small animals such as mice, nestlings, and frogs." Since a crow could likely find carrion at a slaughter house, it can be understood that this would be a place where a crow could likely find food. This supports **option (I)**.

Since a crow could likely find human food scraps and carrion at the city dump, it can be understood that this would be a place where a crow could likely find food. This supports **option (II)**.

A farm has plenty of fields where insects, grain, and small animals are likely to be found. It is also likely that human food scraps would be found on a farm. So, a crow could probably find food at a farm. This supports **option (III)**.

Therefore **(D)** is correct.