

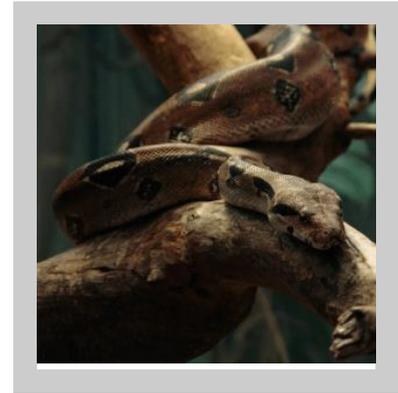
Name _____

Date _____

Amazon Snakes!

The Amazon rainforest is home to a wide variety of notorious, yet fascinating, snakes. Some of the most deadly (and well-known) snakes in the world—the green anaconda, the boa constrictor, the lancehead—live in the Amazon.

Agile on water but awkward on land, the green anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world. At 29 feet long and 550 pounds, these snakes are huge! Most people assume that anacondas are very poisonous, but they are actually non-venomous. Instead, they are constrictors, meaning they squeeze their prey to death before swallowing it whole. The green anaconda loves to lie in wait in shallow, slow moving waters like marshes, swamps, and creeks.



The tree dwelling cousin to the green anaconda is the boa constrictor. Like the green anaconda, the boa constrictor can also grow to be larger than most snakes. These snakes prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps. Because boas are so muscular, they have no problem hanging in the trees until it is time for a snack. The boa has the capability to squeeze its prey to death and swallow an entire animal in one bite. Eating such large meals allows this snake to go weeks before eating again.

By contrast, the lancehead is a much smaller snake. It typically grows to be about a foot long. Like the boa, the lancehead loves to curl itself around tree limbs, but it is not strong enough or large enough to be a constrictor. Despite its size, the lancehead is one of the most deadly snakes in South America because it is extremely sneaky and venomous. It stealthily hunts for its prey by using heat sensors in pits on the side of its face. Once it detects a warm body, it strikes, releasing paralyzing venom into its victim.

Long and strong green anacondas, constricting boas, and life-threatening lanceheads are just a few of the deadly variety of snakes that dwell in the Amazon rainforest.

1) As used in paragraph 1, which of the following choices gives the best DEFINITION for the word **notorious**?

- A. included in popular culture
- B. famous or commonly celebrated
- C. widely and unfavorably known
- D. evil or malintentioned

- 2) According to information in the passage, both green anacondas and boa constrictors
- I. constrict their prey before eating it whole
 - II. are larger than most other snakes
 - III. love curling themselves around trees
- A. I only
- B. I and II only
- C. II and III only
- D. I, II, and III
- 3) Based on its use in paragraph 2, it can be understood that **agile** belongs to which of the following word groups?
- A. gentle, soft, light
- B. athletic, nimble, quick
- C. secret, stealthy, hidden
- D. gigantic, huge, enormous
- 4) According to information in the passage, the boa constrictor is
- A. extremely venomous
- B. the deadliest snake in South America
- C. always looking for its next meal
- D. six feet long
- 5) Which of the following statements from the passage best summarizes how boa constrictors differ from green anacondas?
- A. "Like the boa, the Lancehead loves to curl itself around tree limbs, but it is not strong enough or large enough to be a constrictor."
- B. "Agile on water but awkward on land, the Green Anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world."
- C. "The boa has the capability to squeeze its prey to death and swallow an entire animal in one bite."
- D. "These snakes prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps."

Answers and Explanations

1) C

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

notorious (*adjective*): famous or well known, typically for some bad quality or deed.

In paragraph 1, the author writes, “The Amazon Rainforest is home to a wide variety of notorious, yet fascinating, snakes.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what notorious most nearly means. In the sentence following the above sentence, the author writes, “Some of the most deadly (and well-known) snakes in the world—the Green Anaconda, the Boa Constrictor, the Lancehead—live in the Amazon.” Since the author mentions that these notorious snakes are “deadly,” and most things that are deadly to humans are well known, we can tell that notorious must mean something like famous or well known. This accords with the definition given in choice **(C)**. Therefore it is correct.

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

Something notorious is famous, but in a bad, not good or celebrated, way. Therefore choice **(B)** is incorrect.

Although these snakes are “deadly,” or dangerous, they are not necessarily evil or malintentioned. After all, they’re just looking for a bite to eat. They are not actively seeking to harm other creatures as an end in itself. Therefore choice **(D)** is incorrect.

2) B

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 2, the author writes that green anacondas “are constrictors, meaning they squeeze their prey to death, before swallowing it whole.” In paragraph 3, the author writes, “The boa has the capability to squeeze its prey to death and swallow an entire animal in one bite.” This lets us know that both green anacondas and boa constrictors constrict their prey before eating it whole. This supports **option (I)**.

In paragraph 2, the author writes that, “At 29 feet long and 550 pounds [green anacondas] are huge!” Since they are huge, we can tell that they are larger than most other snakes. In paragraph 3, the author writes, “the boa constrictor can also grow to be larger than most snakes.” The word “also” in this selection refers back to the green anaconda previously mentioned by the author. Using this information, we can tell that both green anacondas and boa constrictors are larger than most other snakes. This supports **option (II)**.

In paragraph 3, the author writes that boa constrictors “prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps.” In the previous paragraph, the author mentions that green anacondas prefer water to land, so this lets us know that both types of snakes do not love curling themselves around trees. This eliminates **option (III)**.

Therefore **(B)** is correct.

3) B

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

agile (*adjective*): able to move quickly and easily.

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Agile on water but awkward on land, the Green Anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what agile most nearly means. The word “but” in the first part of this selection lets us know that agile must mean something like the opposite of awkward. In the next sentence, the author writes, “At 29 feet long and 550 pounds, these snakes are huge!” Since these snakes are so big, we can conclude that it is easier for them to move in water than on land. This means that agile must mean something like able to move quickly and easily, since quickly and easily is almost the opposite of awkwardly. *Athletic*, *nimble*, and *quick* are all words that describe something that moves quickly or easily. This lets us know that agile belongs to the word group containing these words, and **(B)** is correct.

Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that mean something like able to move quickly and easily. *Gentle*, *soft*, and *light* all refer to force of touch and not ease of movement. This lets us know that agile does not belong to the word group containing the words gentle, soft, and light. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that mean something like able to move quickly and easily. *Secret*, *stealthy*, and *hidden* all describe ways of doing something that are not obvious. Because the meaning of the words in this group does not apply to ease of movement, we can tell that agile does not belong to the word group containing secret, stealthy, and hidden. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that mean something like able to move quickly and easily. *Gigantic*, *huge*, and *enormous* are all words that relate to size, not ease of movement. This lets us know that agile does not belong to the word group containing gigantic, huge, and enormous. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) D

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses boa constrictors in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 3 starts with: “The tree dwelling cousin to the green anaconda is the boa constrictor.” This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 3.

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “These snakes prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps.” Since these snakes have “six-foot-long bodies” we can tell that the boa constrictor is 6 feet long. This means **(D)** is correct.

In paragraph 4, the author writes that the “lancehead is one of the most deadly snakes in South America because it is extremely sneaky and venomous.” This means that the lancehead, not the boa constrictor, is extremely venomous. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

The author does not provide any information to support choices **(B)** or **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) D

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses boa constrictors in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 3 starts with: "The tree dwelling cousin to the green anaconda is the boa constrictor." This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 3.

In paragraph 3, the author writes that boa constrictors, "prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps." In the previous paragraph, the author has just written about how the green anaconda "loves to lie in wait in shallow, slow moving waters like marshes, swamps, and creeks." This means that boa constrictors differ from green anacondas based on where they are typically found. Using this information, we can tell that the statement from the passage—"These snakes prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps."—best summarizes how boa constrictors differ from green anacondas. Therefore **(D)** is correct

The statement, "Like the boa, the lancehead loves to curl itself around tree limbs, but it is not strong enough or large enough to be a constrictor," highlights a major difference between the lancehead and the boa constrictor. Using this information, we can tell that this statement does not best summarize how boa constrictors differ from green anacondas. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

The statement "Agile on water but awkward on land, the green anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world," does not highlight a major difference between boa constrictors and green anacondas. Because this statement only presents a fact about green anacondas, we can tell that it does not best summarize how boa constrictors differ from green anacondas. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

The statement "The boa has the capability to squeeze its prey to death and swallow an entire animal in one bite" does not highlight a major difference between boa constrictors and green anacondas.

Because this statement only presents a fact about boa constrictors, we can tell that it does not best summarize how boa constrictors differ from green anacondas. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

6) A

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 4, the author writes, "the lancehead is a much smaller snake. It typically grows to be about a foot long." In paragraph 3, the author writes, "[boa constrictors] prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs..." In paragraph 2, the author writes, "At 29 feet long and 550 pounds, [green anacondas] are huge!" Using this information, we can tell that the lancehead is about one foot long, the boa constrictor is about six feet long, and the Green Anaconda is roughly 29 feet long. This means that the correct order of the snakes, in terms of length, from smallest to largest is: lancehead, boa constrictor, green anaconda. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

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

7) C

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 4, the author writes that the lancehead “stealthily hunts for its prey by using heat sensors in pits on the side of its face. Once it detects a warm body, it strikes, releasing paralyzing venom into its victim.” Previously, the author wrote that both the green anaconda and the boa constrictor constrict their prey before swallowing it whole. The author mentioned in paragraph 2 that the “green anaconda loves to lie in wait,” and in paragraph 3, that the boa constrictor waits in trees “until it is time for a snack.” Using this information, we can tell that one way the lancehead is different from both the boa constrictor and the green anaconda is that it injects paralyzing venom into its prey. This supports **option (I)**.

In paragraph 4, the author writes, “Like the boa, the lancehead loves to curl itself around tree limbs.” This lets us know that this quality does not make the lancehead different from both the boa constrictor and the green anaconda. This eliminates **option (II)**.

In paragraph 4, the author writes that the lancehead “stealthily hunts for its prey by using heat sensors in pits on the side of its face.” The author mentioned in paragraph 2 that the “green anaconda loves to lie in wait,” and in paragraph 3, that the boa constrictor hangs in trees, waiting, “until it is time for a snack.” Using this information, we can tell that one way the lancehead is different from both the Boa Constrictor and the Green Anaconda is that it searches out its prey, rather than lying in wait. This supports **option (III)**.

Therefore **(C)** is correct.