Puppies love to run and tumble. They chase each other around the yard. They wrestle and nip each other gently. A kitten will pounce on a toy mouse or leap high for a piece of yarn.

Why do animals play? For the same reason YOU play—because it’s FUN! But there is more to animal play than just fun. For animals in the wild, play is important to their very survival. Young animals have to learn about their world. They have to exercise their muscles and practice all the skills they will need to be successful adults.

Sometimes a young deer will leap and frolic. With each twisting, twirling dance, the fawn’s legs are getting stronger. It is learning how to run fast and zigzag to confuse predators. That will keep it safe when it is time to leave its mother’s side.

While deer have to learn to escape from predators, young lion cubs must learn how to hunt. When a cub is little, it stalks its brother or sister. It will slink along on crouched legs. When the moment seems right, the cub pounces! The other cub bats back with its paws and wriggles free.

The cubs keep their claws in, though, and their bites are gentle.

The cubs are not trying to hurt each other. They are playing at being great hunters. This is practice for the real thing.

Wolves live in family groups called packs. When the pups are grown up, they will hunt together and watch out for each other. So, they must learn to communicate.
A wolf pup signals another pup that she wants to play. She stretches out her front legs and bows. She wiggles and wags her tail. As they play, both pups hold their mouths slightly open. That’s how they tell each other “yes, we are still playing!”

When most young animals wrestle, race, or chase, it’s not about winning. Each youngster is building its strength and skills. And they are learning to cooperate. If one youngster plays too rough, the others will let him know they are unhappy with his behavior.

Groups of young vervet monkeys sometimes sneak away from the adults in their family. All wrapped up in their games, the little ones may not notice when danger is near. So an adult monkey will go looking for the straying youngsters. The adult will yell out a warning.

Watch out! Be careful! You’ve heard parents or teachers say these things when you play. Animals have to learn about the dangers in their world too. Playing helps them learn. Playing helps them get along. Playing makes them strong and confident.
1. What is the main topic of paragraph 2?
   a. Animals play for fun.
   b. Playing is important for young animals’ survival.
   c. People and animals like to play.
   d. People need to exercise.

2. What is the main topic of the passage?
   a. Animals play for fun so they can learn to survive.
   b. Animals play to learn new tricks.
   c. Animals think it’s fun and like to play chase.
   d. Animals get bored in the wild.

3. What is the main topic of paragraph 7?
   a. Wolf pups wag their tails
   b. Wolf pups have signals for playing
   c. Wolf pups
   d. Wolf pups like to stretch

4. Why did the author feel it was important to let you know, “Yes they are still playing!” in paragraph 7.
   a. The author talks about how animals play.
   b. The author is talking about how each animal knows they are playing so they will not get hurt.
   c. The author wants the other animals to think they are wrestling because they are mad.
   d. The author wanted other animals to learn from their behavior.

5. Which word does the first picture illustrate?
   a. stalk
   b. pounce
   c. enemy
   d. youngster

6. Which sentence from the passage describes the first picture?
   a. They are playing at being great hunters.
   b. The cubs keep their claws in.
   c. Their bites are gentle.
   d. The other cub bats with its paws and wriggles free.
7. Read the sentence from the passage.

It will slink along on crouched legs.

What does the word slink mean in the sentence?
   a. to move quietly
   b. run
   c. freeze
   d. stand

8. Read the sentence from the passage below

So an adult monkey will go looking for the straying youngsters.

What does the word straying mean in this sentence?
   a. To straighten something out
   b. Wander off
   c. To stay in one spot
   d. To struggle

9. What words from paragraph 6 help you to understands what packs means?
   a. Hunt together
   b. Communicate
   c. Family groups
   d. Grown up

10. Which two words have the same vowel sound?
    a. pounce
    b. strong
    c. crouched
    d. monkeys

11. Which two words have the same ending sounds?
    a. frolic
    b. stronger
    c. communicate
    d. youngster

12. Which two words have a long e sound?
    a. puppy
    b. gently
    c. pounce
    d. mouse