

Pioneer Press Newspapers In Education 2017
FOURTH GRADE READING

NOTE TO TEACHERS/PARENTS: Learning standard addressed in each question is included after the answer.

Read the following article that tells about a photographer that finds objects in nature that are in the shape of letters. The article is written in a question (Q), answer (A), format. Then answer questions 1-12. Questions will ask you about information in the article. This article has been revised in places to better suit the reading level.

Landscape photographer finds alphabet in nature

By Maya Beckstrom , *Pioneer Press*

¹The letter "Y" is the easiest to spot in nature. It pops up everywhere — in the fork of a tree or a crack in a rock. The most **elusive** is the letter "Q," according to photographer Joe Rossi, who spent 18 months roaming the state's woods, bogs and prairies taking the pictures that appear in "Minnesota's Hidden Alphabet." We talked with Rossi from his home near Bemidji, where he settled after a nearly 25-year career as a photographer at the Pioneer Press.

²**Q:** Where did your idea to photograph letters in nature come from?

A: There was a photographer who traveled around the world shooting butterflies, and he made a butterfly alphabet. I thought, "Man, that's cool, could I do that?" A year or two later I was in my parents' backyard in Bemidji. It was spring and the ferns were just emerging. And there was the letter "P"!

³**Q:** How did this assignment make you look at nature differently?

A: It took me awhile to get a feel for how I wanted to approach it. One question was, how literal, exact or real, do you want each letter to be? Also, how big do you want the object to be? The smallest is from a letter "N," a small detail from a false morel. The largest object would probably be the pelican for letter "J."

⁴I found that a lot of plants were more linear, straight up and down, and worked better if I photographed them as they were emerging, just beginning to bloom. Like the prairie smoke flower for the letter "R".

⁵**Q:** You found a "Y" in a cracked sheet of winter ice. How did you spot it?

A: It was a pond in the Chippewa National Forest. I was killing time waiting for a certain deer to show up. And I just saw it. I guess I've always been going out and looking for something, and with the alphabet, it was just a more defined search. Before it was, 'Let's see if I can find pasque flowers.' Now it was like, 'I know I can find a pasque flower, but can I find one I could make a letter out of?'

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⁶**Q:** So you didn't always go out with the idea of finding a particular letter?

A: No, sometimes it was happenstance, like the monarch caterpillar. I just got done mowing my mom's yard and she had milkweeds growing in the back. It was like hey, let's see what I can get out of this. Or the painted turtle [letter B]. I was driving on Highway 71 near Bemidji and Turtle River and I had to bring him across the highway. I was looking at his shell and thinking, well that's interesting. The tradeoff was — I'll give you safe passage across the highway, but you have to put up with me photographing you for a while. I have my gear in a rolling bag and keep it in the trunk. It's the proverbial "be prepared."

⁷**Q:** Do you have a favorite?

A: The letter "J." That was so unexpected. I was photographing pelicans with the idea of getting a letter out of it, and then this pelican opened its beak, just once and I shot it. When I was going through my take, I thought, well that's kind of a letter "J."

Article questions

Landscape photographer finds alphabet in nature

1. Another title for this story might be?

- A. The ABC's of nature
- B. Joe Rossi, photographer
- C. Turtles cross the road
- D. Joe Rossi returns to Bemidji

2. What was Joe Rossi searching for in nature?

- A. deer
- B. butterflies
- C. the alphabet letters
- D. turtles

3. Where was Rossi when he first found a "Y" in winter ice?

- A. Bemidji
- B. Chippewa National forest
- C. his mom's yard
- D. none of the above

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4. How did Rossi look at nature differently for this project?

- A. He needed to decide on the time of day to take a picture.
- B. He needed to wait for animals to appear.
- C. He needed to decide on the size of the objects that represented each letter.
- D. He looked at nature more carefully.

5. In this article, the word elusive means

- A. common
- B. easily found
- C. usual
- D. hard to find

6. After reading this article you might think Joe Rossi is the kind of man who

- A. likes to mow the lawn.
- B. finds beauty in nature.
- C. enjoys playing video games.
- D. likes to travel.

7. How is the idea of “be prepared” part of Rossi’s life?

- A. He is always thinking about letters.
- B. He keeps his gear in the trunk.
- C. He likes to talk to animals.
- D. He loves to spend time in his mom’s yard.

8. In this article, the word passage does NOT mean

- A. journey
- B. hallway
- C. trip
- D. travel

9. Where was the painted turtle when Rossi found it?

- A. on the highway
- B. in Turtle River
- C. in Rossi’s trunk
- D. in the woods by Bemidji

10. What did Rossi find that was unexpected?

- A. He found his camera in the trunk.
- B. He found a book on butterflies.
- C. He found the letter “J” when a pelican opened its beak.
- D. He could not find the letter “Y”.

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11. What did Rossi do with the photos he took for 18 months?

- A. He lost the pictures in a pond.
- B. He decided to throw away the pictures and begin again.
- C. Someone stole his pictures and now he can't find them.
- D. His pictures appeared in "Minnesota's Hidden Alphabet."

12. Where did the idea come from for Rossi's photos?

- A. He could find pasque flowers.
- B. He wanted to help turtles.
- C. He had a 25-year career as a photographer.
- D. He saw a butterfly alphabet book.

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Read the following article to find out what a saltwater crocodile named Elvis did! Then answer the 10 questions. Questions will ask you about information in the article. This article has been edited to meet the test specifications.

Cranky croc steals Aussie zoo worker's lawn mower

By Kristen Gelinea

¹A giant saltwater crocodile named Elvis, with an apparent **fondness** for household machinery, charged at an Australian reptile park worker. He then stole the man's lawn mower.

²Tim Faulkner, operations manager at the Australian Reptile Park, was one of three workers tending to the lawn in Elvis' enclosure. He heard reptile keeper Billy Collett yell. Faulkner looked up to see the 16-foot, 1,100-pound crocodile lunging out of its lagoon at Collett. Collett warded off the creature with his mower.

³“Before we knew it, the croc had the mower above his head,” Faulkner said. “He got his jaws around the top of the mower. Then he picked it up. Next he took it underwater with him.” The workers quickly left the enclosure. Elvis, meanwhile, showed no signs of relinquishing his new toy. He guarded it closely all morning.

⁴Eventually, Faulkner realized he had no other choice but to go back for the mower. Collett lured Elvis to the opposite end of the lagoon with a heaping helping of kangaroo meat. While Elvis was busy, Faulkner plunged, fully clothed, into the water. Before grabbing the mower, however, he had to search the bottom of the lagoon for two 3-inch teeth Elvis lost during the encounter. He quickly found the teeth and escaped from the pool. He was unharmed and had the mower too. The massive crocodile was lurking just feet away from Faulkner.

⁵Some may question the wisdom of going after a couple of teeth. But Faulkner said finding the two teeth was critical. “They clog up the filter systems, and they're a nice souvenir,” he said.

⁶Elvis has a history of crankiness. He has lunged at staff before. But this is the first time he has stolen something from one of the workers.

⁷The croc was initially captured in the northern Australian city of Darwin. That's where he had been attacking fishing boats. He was then moved to a crocodile farm. At the farm, he proceeded to fight with other crocodiles. In 2008, he was moved to the reptile park. He has enjoyed **solitary** confinement in his own enclosure.

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⁸“When they are the dominant crocs, they’re just full of energy,” Faulkner said. “He’s got his own beautiful yard. He wants to be a solitary creature. He’s happy.”

⁹Despite having to give up the lawn mower, Elvis was clearly pleased with himself. “He’s beaten us today and he’s kingpin. He’s going to be walking around with his chest puffed out all day,” Faulkner said. And how about the staff at the reptile park?

¹⁰“I can’t lie, the bosses are not going to be happy about the cost of a new lawn mower,” Faulkner said with a laugh. “But we love it. No one’s injured. And when you get scared, but it all turns out to be good, it’s actually quite enjoyable.”

Article questions

Cranky croc steals Aussie zoo worker’s lawn mower

13. What did Elvis lose during the encounter with the lawn mower?

- A. His dinner
- B. A collar
- C. Two teeth
- D. Three workers

14. How did Elvis get the lawn mower into the lagoon?

- A. He got his jaws around the mower.
- B. The worker pushed the mower into the lagoon.
- C. The mower rolled into the lagoon.
- D. Elvis pushed the mower into the lagoon.

15. In this article, the word solitary means all of the following *except*:

- A. Alone
- B. Joint
- C. Private
- D. By one’s self

16. What was Elvis doing when he was initially captured?

- A. He was fighting other crocodiles.
- B. He was playing with lawn mowers.
- C. He was sunning himself.
- D. He was attacking fishing boats.

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17. Why did the worker need to find the two 3-inch teeth?

- A. The dentist needed the teeth.
- B. The teeth could clog the filtering system.
- C. He needed to give them to his boss.
- D. The crocodile needed his teeth back.

18. Why did Elvis need to live alone?

- A. He fought with the other crocodiles.
- B. He was cranky.
- C. He was the dominant crocodile.
- D. All of the above

19. In this article the word fondness means:

- A. Hatred
- B. Dislike
- C. Liking
- D. Loathing

20. Why did the workers need to quickly leave Elvis' enclosure?

- A. Elvis attacked one of the workers.
- B. The filter system was clogged.
- C. The lawn mower needed more gas.
- D. Elvis was being moved to a crocodile farm.

21. What were the three workers doing in Elvis' enclosure?

- A. They were feeding Elvis.
- B. They were checking his teeth.
- C. They were swimming in the lagoon.
- D. They were tending to the lawn.

22. What was Elvis pleased about?

- A. He was able to steal the lawn mower.
- B. He was sad to be living alone.
- C. He got new teeth.
- D. He liked swimming with the workers.

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ANSWERS

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1. A (main idea/inferential)
2. C (literal)
3. B (literal)
4. D (inferential)
5. D (vocabulary)
6. B (inferential)
7. B (literal)
8. B (vocabulary/inferential)
9. A (literal)
10. C (inferential)
11. D (literal)
12. D (literal)

Cranky croc steals Aussie zoo worker's lawn mower

13. C (literal)
14. A (literal)
15. B (vocabulary)
16. D (literal)
17. B (literal)
18. D (inferential)
19. C (vocabulary)
20. A (inferential)
21. D (literal)
22. A (inferential)