

Name: _____



The Helpful Llama

by Guy Belleranti

Did you know that the llama of South and North America is related to the camel? Llamas don't have humps like camels and don't grow as large, but like their camel cousins they are very helpful to man.

It is believed llamas were domesticated from guanacos (another camel cousin) 4,000 to 5,000 years ago. They are among the oldest domesticated animals in the world.

Since ancient times the native people of the Andean Mountains of Peru have used llamas as pack animals. This means they would pack heavy items in sacks on a llama's back to carry goods from one place to another. They also used llama wool for clothing, rugs and ropes and their hides for shoes, gloves and shelter. Llamas have been a source of meat, and their pellets are dried and burned for fuel.

Llamas are used as pack animals in the United States too. Hikers and forest work crews sometimes use llamas to carry their gear. They are also used for pulling carts. A few people even have llamas as pets.

Several things make llamas great pack animals.

- They are sure-footed and can carry heavy loads 5, 10 or even 20 miles a day over rough and steep terrain.
- Their blood absorbs more oxygen than most other mammals. This makes llamas excellent pack animals in the mountains where the oxygen is thinner.
- They need less water than most other animals.
- They are intelligent and willing workers. Because they are social animals they are happiest and do their best when in herds.

Recently, llamas have also been used as guard animals working together with herding dogs to protect sheep and goats from coyotes.



About the Author

Guy Belleranti works as a docent at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences working with animals and teaching others.

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1. What is a pack animal?

2. Ancient native people of Peru did not use llamas for...

- a. clothing
- b. transporting goods
- c. protecting sheep
- d. food

3. What does the word *domesticated* mean?

- a. made stronger, so they can carry more
- b. tamed, so humans can control them
- c. eaten on a regular basis
- d. treated poorly

4. Explain how a llama's blood makes it a good pack animal in the mountains.

5. Name two ways a llama is different from a camel.

6. What is the main idea of this article?

- a. Llamas and camels are similar animals.
- b. Llamas are very useful to people.
- c. Llamas live in groups and are helpful to each other.
- d. Llamas need less water than other animals.

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Read the sentences from the article.

Choose the best definition for each underlined word.



1. They also used llama wool for clothing.
 - a. stiff hooves on an animal's foot
 - b. thin hair that grows on an animal's back
 - c. type of animal skin used to make sweaters
 - d. thick hair that grows on certain animals
2. This makes llamas excellent pack animals in the mountains where the oxygen is thinner.
 - a. type of gas that is produced by plants
 - b. type of gas that is produced by animals
 - c. type of gas that is produced by llamas
 - d. type of gas that is harmful to humans
3. They are sure-footed and can carry heavy loads 5, 10 or even 20 miles a day over rough and steep terrain.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. type of mountainc. a creek or river	<ol style="list-style-type: none">b. an area of landd. opposite of smooth
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4. Their blood absorbs more oxygen than most other mammals.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. takes inc. turns red	<ol style="list-style-type: none">b. lets outd. gets thicker
--	---
5. Since ancient times the native people of the Andean Mountains of Peru have used llamas as pack animals.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. country in North Americac. island country in the Atlantic	<ol style="list-style-type: none">b. state in the United States of Americad. country is South America
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6. Guy Belleranti works as a docent at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. person who feeds animalsc. veterinarian or animal doctor	<ol style="list-style-type: none">b. person who trains animalsd. guide who shares information with visitors
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ANSWER KEY

The Helpful Llama

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1. What is a pack animal?

an animal that carries goods in sacks or packs for humans

2. Ancient native people of Peru did not use llamas for... c

- a. clothing
- b. transporting goods
- c. protecting sheep
- d. food

3. What does the word *domesticated* mean? b

- a. made stronger, so they can carry more
- b. tamed, so humans can control them
- c. eaten on a regular basis
- d. treated poorly

4. Explain how a llama's blood makes it a good pack animal in the mountains.

A llama's blood can absorb more oxygen, which means it is better adapted to survive in mountains where the air is thinner.

5. Name two ways a llama is different from a camel.

Llamas don't have humps. They are also smaller than camels.
Also accept: They live in North and South America.

6. What is the main idea of this article? b

- a. Llamas and camels are similar animals.
- b. Llamas are very useful to people.
- c. Llamas live in groups and are helpful to each other.
- d. Llamas need less water than other animals.

ANSWER KEY

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 - b. thin hair that grows on an animal's back
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2. This makes llamas excellent pack animals in the mountains where the oxygen is thinner. **a**
 - a. **type of gas that is produced by plants**
 - b. type of gas that is produced by animals
 - c. type of gas that is produced by llamas
 - d. type of gas that is harmful to humans
3. They are sure-footed and can carry heavy loads 5, 10 or even 20 miles a day over rough and steep terrain. **b**
 - a. type of mountain
 - b. **an area of land**
 - c. a creek or river
 - d. opposite of smooth
4. Their blood absorbs more oxygen than most other mammals. **a**
 - a. **takes in**
 - b. lets out
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5. Since ancient times the native people of the Andean Mountains of Peru have used llamas as pack animals. **d**
 - a. country in North America
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 - c. island country in the Atlantic
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 - a. person who feeds animals
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