

Comprehension Workbook 7

# Ghost crab

## The world's fastest crab



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles



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# Ghost crab

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with your normal subject studies. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our textbook.)

## Contents

### Unit 7: Ghost crab

|   |                              |    |
|---|------------------------------|----|
|    | The world's fastest crab     | 2  |
|   | Understanding words          | 4  |
|  | Finding key words            | 5  |
|  | Summarising                  | 6  |
|  | Sequencing                   | 7  |
|  | Get to the facts (AF 2-3)    | 8  |
|  | Whys and wherefores (AF 4-5) | 9  |
|  | Opinions matter (AFs 6-7)    | 10 |
|  | Talking it through           | 11 |
|  | Make a story...              | 12 |
|   | Print the story (from PDF)   | 13 |



# Ghost crab

Ghost crabs are very small sandy-coloured crabs that burrow into the sandy shores of most tropical and subtropical countries. Many kinds of ghost crab are no more than five centimetres long.



There may be up to five thousand ghost crabs in each kilometre of shore, but you rarely see them because its pale colour makes a ghost crab nearly invisible when it crawls about over sand. It is also active usually only from dusk to dawn. As a result, it is difficult to spot, hence its name of ghost crab. However, you can easily spot their burrows by day as little holes in the sand.

The ghost crab has five pairs of very hairy legs and it walks on four pairs, leaving the large pair at the front to defend itself.

Despite their tiny size, these crabs can run at up to 16km/hr (10mph) so it is amazingly hard for people to keep up with them even though they are so much smaller.

At very high speed, the ghost crab raises its fourth pair of legs off the ground. At its highest speed, it uses only the first two pairs of legs.

The ghost crab has large black eyes that are supported on stalks and it can see in any direction. Male crabs have horns attached to the end of the eyes. You can spot these in the pictures.

Ghost crabs dig extraordinarily deep burrows compared to their size. A burrow may be over a metre deep.

At night, when goat crabs pop out of their burrows for feeding, they eat any very small pieces of plant, as well as small animals, such as tiny shrimps. The biggest kinds also eat smaller crabs, clams and eggs.



# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

**a** Write the sentence in which you found the word 'burrow'.

**b** From that sentence, suggest what 'burrow' means.

**c** Write a new sentence using the word 'burrow'.

**d** Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'burrow'.

**e** Draw a small picture showing what you think 'burrow' means.



# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

| Key word       | Synonym (similar word) |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Example: shore | coast                  |
|                |                        |
|                |                        |
|                |                        |
|                |                        |
|                |                        |
|                |                        |
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3

# Summarising

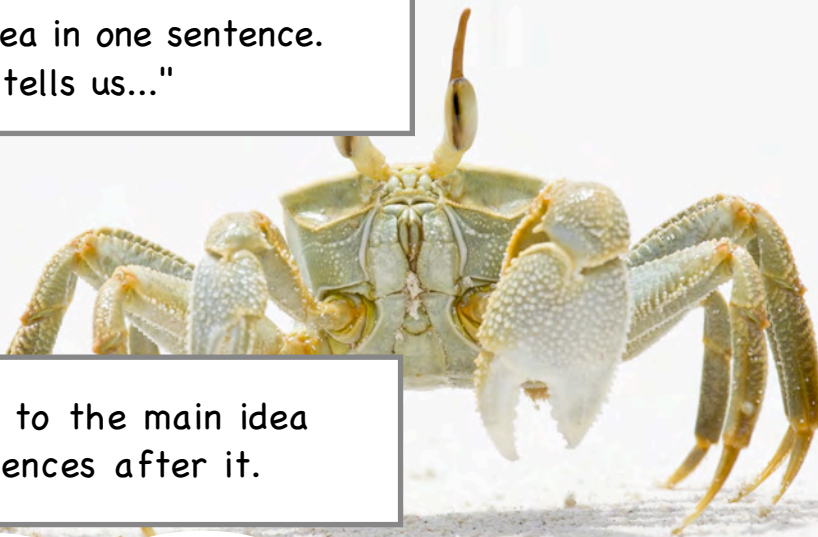
(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

**1** Write a heading for your summary.

**2** Now write the main idea in one sentence.  
e.g. "This story tells us..."

**3** Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.



**Finally,  
can you rewrite your  
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

**There is  
nothing wrong  
with rewriting; even  
the best authors  
rewrite their  
work.**



# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order.  
Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make



While looking for food, if they sense danger, they start to run.

Ghost crabs come out of their burrows to look for food.

They can run at up to 16km/hr to escape danger.

As soon as the sun begins to set, the ghost crabs come out.

Ghost crabs live in burrows up to a metre deep.

During the day, you rarely see a ghost crab.



# Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



1 Where do we find ghost crabs?

2 How many ghost crabs live in a kilometre of beach?

3 How many pairs of legs do they have?

4 How fast can they run?

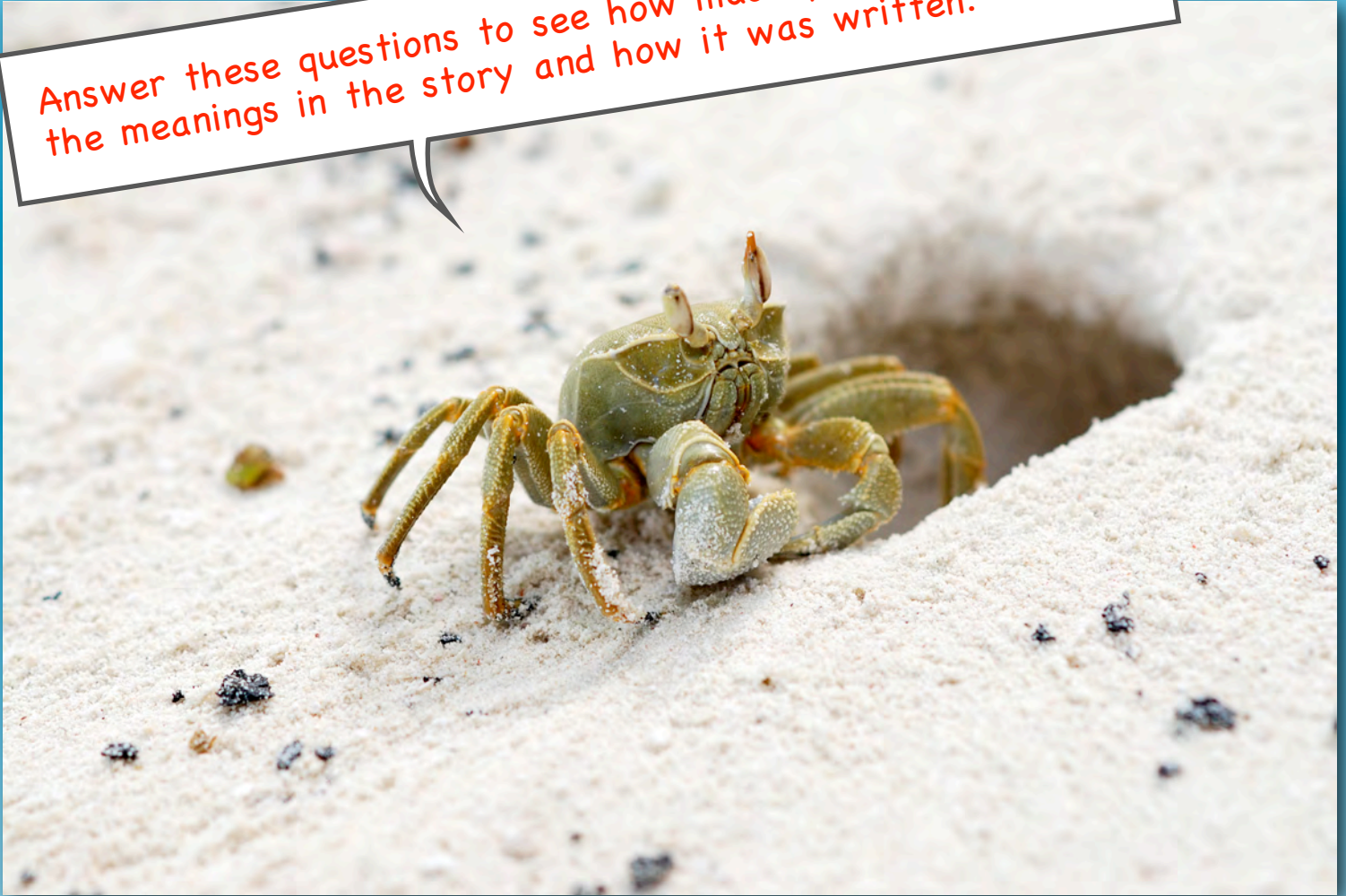
5 What time of day are they active?





# Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.



1 Why do ghost crabs live in burrows?

2 Why are they called ghost crabs?

3 What is their main means of getting out of danger?

4 When do they lift some pairs of feet off the ground?





# Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

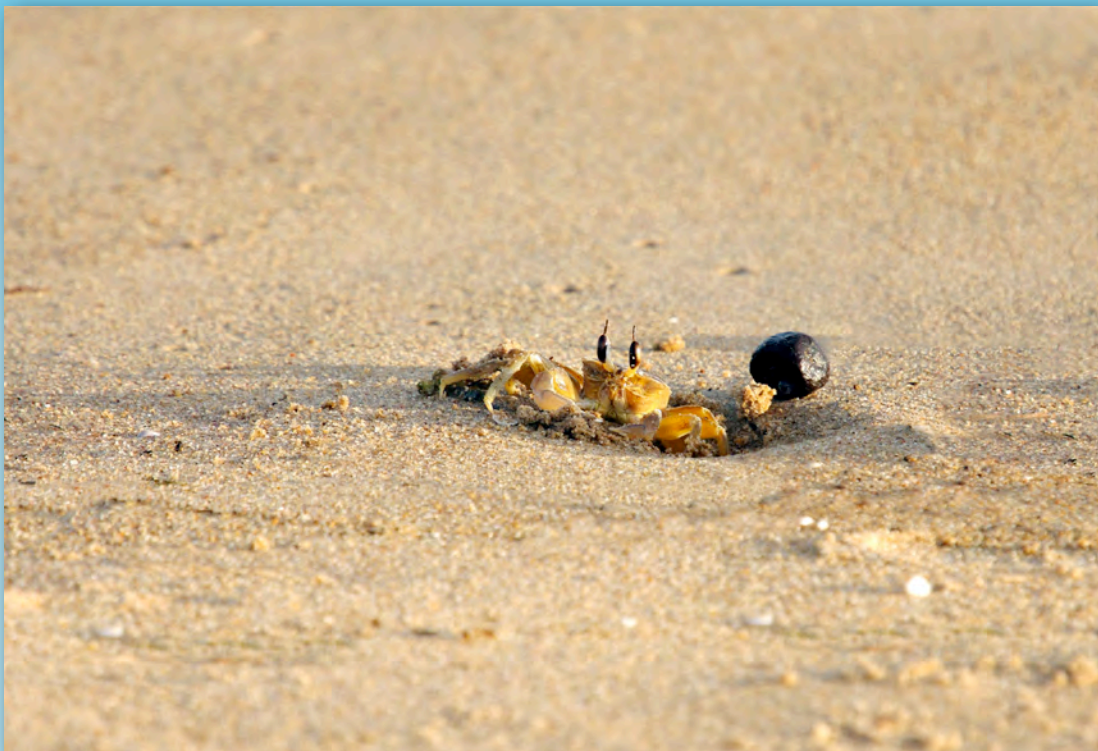
1 Do you think it is easy to tell males from females?

2 Do you think ghost crabs are important?

3 Write about why it is worth making sure ghost crabs live.

4 Do you think the way ghost crabs live helps them stay clear of people?

5 Why is it helpful for an animal to stay out of reach of people?





# Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



## Discussion topic: Beach pollution

Ghost crabs live in burrows in the sand. So what would happen if the beach were polluted with sewage from a town? Would they suffer more than, say, fish, and does it matter?





# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



## The crab promenade

Ghost crabs come out of their holes at sunset and walk about the beach in their thousands. It is almost like people promenading along the shore in their Sunday best clothes. So, what if ghost crabs could talk? What would they say to one another as they passed? Suppose you were a crab. What would you say?...



# Ghost crabs

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