



Mountain lion

Wildlife among the peaks

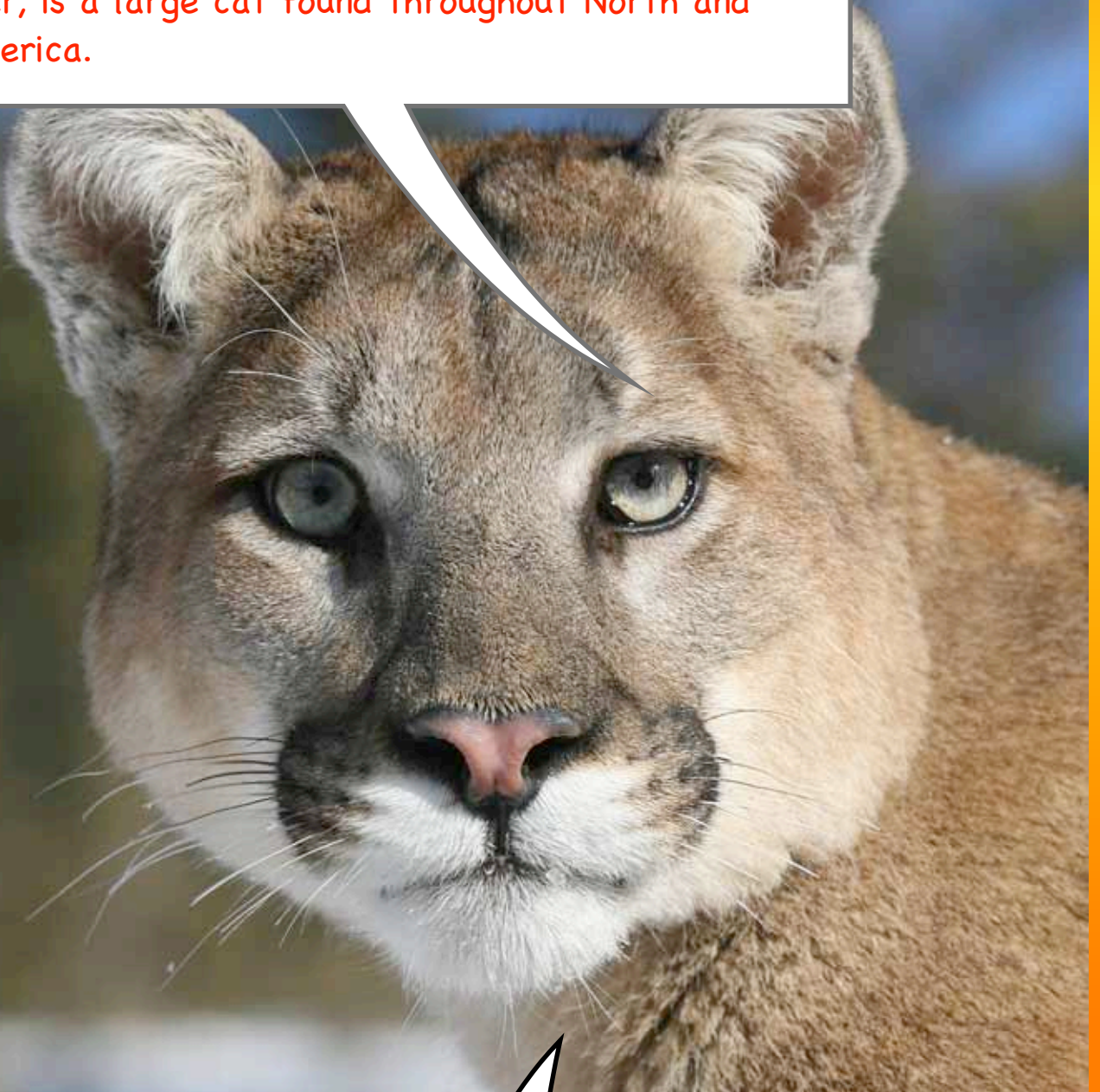
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Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Mountain lion

The mountain lion, also known as a puma, mountain cat, or panther, is a large cat found throughout North and South America.



It is a solitary cat. The way it catches its food is by stalking and ambush. Like all cats, it needs to feed exclusively on meat to survive. It cannot eat plants. It will capture and kill deer as large as moose, as well as cattle, horses and sheep. It will also eat small animals such as mice, and even eat insects. It is successful because it can survive on such a wide range of food.

Mountain lions are good climbers and they can also swim. They live in rocky areas with dense bushes. The bushes provide cover for ambush.

Lions stalk between dusk and dawn through brush and trees, across ledges, or other places where there is cover. They then leap onto unsuspecting prey. A mountain lion eats a deer every two weeks. The cat drags a kill to a place it likes, covers it with brush, and returns to feed over the next few days.

Mountain lions mark out very large territories for themselves and will fight off other lions. So a large area as big as 100 square kilometres may have just one lion in it. That is why they are so rarely seen.

However, there are other large animals who will fight the mountain lion for food. These include the grey wolf and bear.

Mountain lions stand nearly a metre tall at the shoulders and have long bodies. They weigh about 60kg (about twice that of a large dog) and overall are about the same size as a human. They have very powerful rear legs and can make enormous leaps, sometimes over 5m vertically and 12m horizontally from a standing position!

Mountain lions cannot roar and so are not strictly one of the 'big cats'. Instead they hiss, growl, and purr. They also let out loud screams.

Infants are spotted and born with blue eyes and rings on their tails. They gradually become paler and the spots fade away.





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 '**solitary**'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture showing what you think '**solitary**' 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: enormous	great

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 sense.

Mountain lions are solitary cats that live in the Americas.

Mountain lions have very large territories, which is why it is rare to spot one.

Mountain lions are also known as pumas, panthers and mountain cats.

Mountain lions hunt between dusk and dawn.

Infants are spotted, but gradually lose their spots as they get older.

Mountain lions eat a deer every fortnight.

Mountain lions are successful because they can eat a wide range of food if their main food – deer – is not available.



Get to the facts

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



1 How tall is a mountain lion?

2 How much can it weigh?

3 What does it eat?

4 How big is its territory?

5 How far can it leap?



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 you think a mountain lion hunts between dawn and dusk?

2 What do we know about where it lives?

3 What do you think happens when a mountain lions meets a bear?

4 What food can it not eat? Why do you think that is important?



Opinions matter

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

- 1 What is the way a mountain lion catches its large prey?
- 2 Do you think mountain lions are the most feared animals? Give your reasons.
- 3 What is the connection between how a mountain lion leaps and the way it catches its food?
- 4 If a mountain lion needs a large territory for hunting, what does that tell you about how many deer live in mountains?
- 5 Do you think the pictures in this workbook were taken by tourists? If not, who by? Explain why you think that.





Talking it through

Cub

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



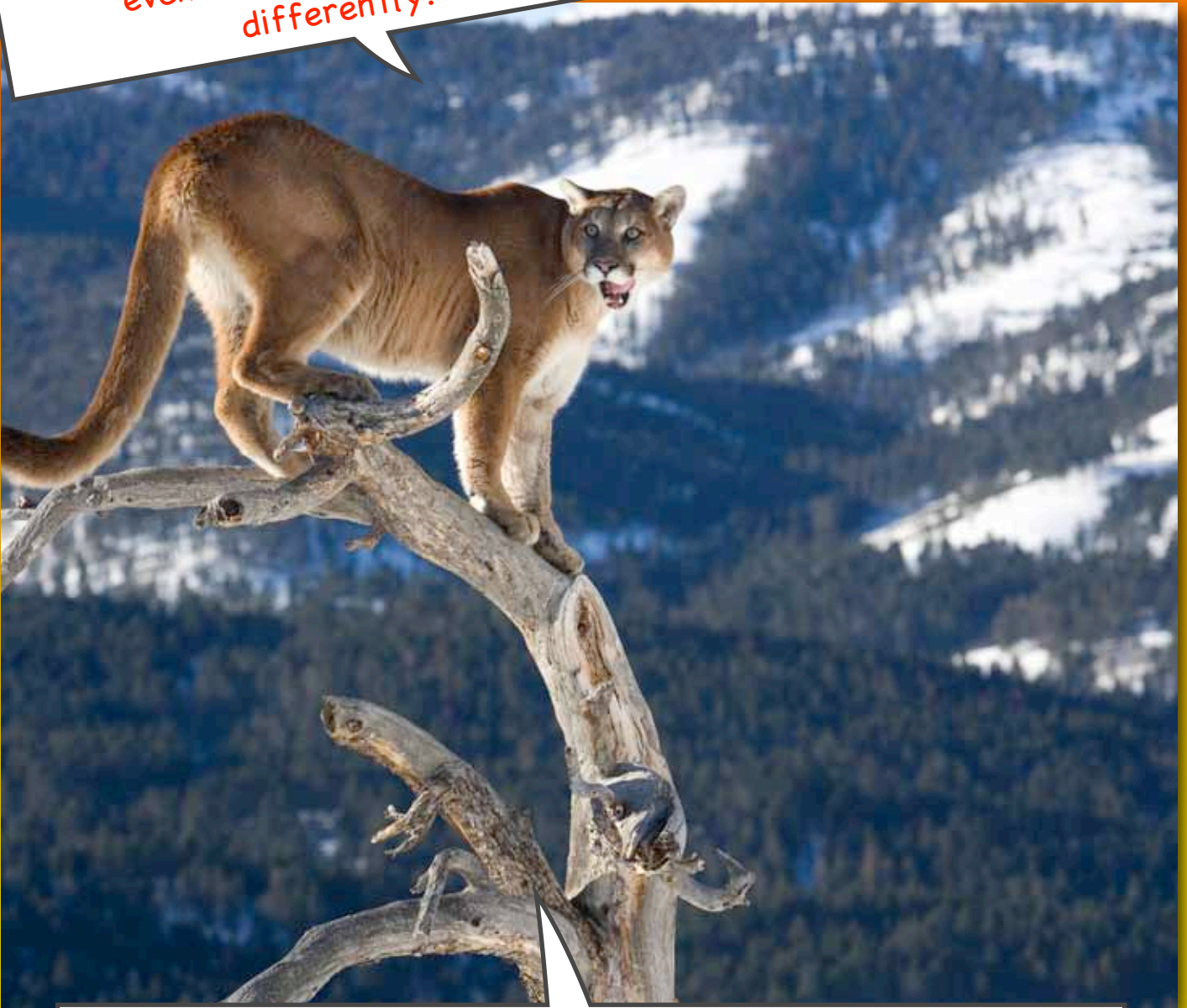
Discussion topic: Protection

Mountain lions can look cuddly, but they are wild animals and need a lot of space. Suppose you want to put up a sign on a mountain trail that gives information about what to do if you met a mountain lion on the trail. What would it say?



Make a story...

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



Dinner or disaster?

Puma was hungry. There was still snow in the mountains even though it was late spring. She looked out from one of her favourite spots – high on a dead trunk. Then she saw something that made her lick her lips... Now continue the story.

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