

Hoffman's Sloth

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

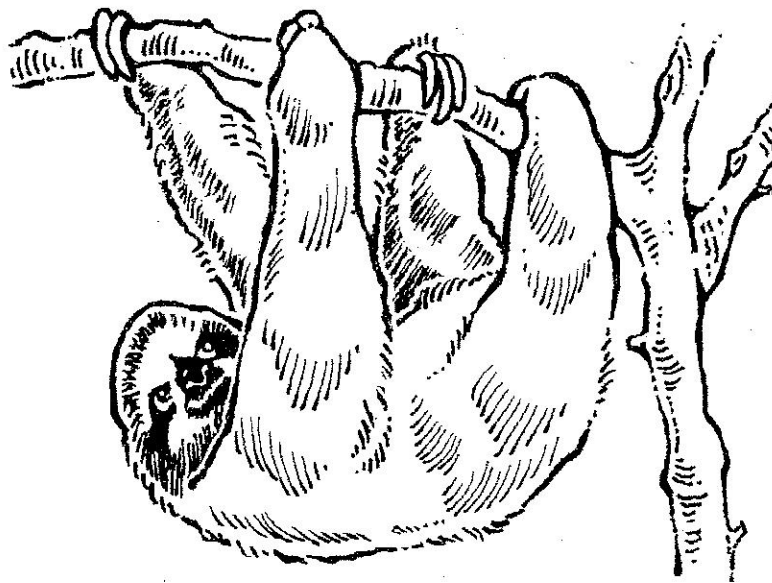
The Hoffman's sloth is one of the strangest animals in the world. First of all, the sloth hangs upside down in a tree almost its whole life. It also has very unusual fur. Take a look at a dog's fur. It grows from the dog's back and hangs down toward the belly. The sloth's fur grows in the opposite direction, from its belly to its back. So even though rain falls on this sloth about four or five times every day, the rainwater runs right off the sloth's fur.

There's something even more amazing about this sloth. There is a little line in each hair. Inside those lines grow tiny green plants called algae. There is so much algae living in the sloth's fur that it makes the whole animal look like a clump of green moss. The sloth is nearly invisible!

The Hoffman's sloth has three toes on its back feet, but only two claws on its hands. The claws are long and sharp and help the animal hang upside down for its whole life. The sloth can also fight with its claws.

Because sloths hang upside down so much, their back muscles are very weak, and they cannot walk. If they go to the ground to get to a new tree, they drag themselves along with their claws.

The sloth does everything upside down. It eats, sleeps, and has babies while it hangs in a tree. Most of the time it does nothing except eat leaves, fruits, and small twigs—and sleep! Now that you have read about the Hoffman's sloth, do you agree that it is very strange?



By Mary Rose

Dear Parents,

One kind of question frequently found on standardized tests asks students to determine the author's purpose in a certain piece of writing. The acronym PIE is an easy way to help your child remember the three main purposes an author might have. PIE stands for Persuade, Inform, or Entertain. Generally speaking, nonfiction writing, which typically explains facts, is aimed at informing readers. Poetry and narrative stories are usually geared toward entertaining. Editorials, advertisements, and certain essays try to persuade readers. Even young readers are expected to know these differences. In some states, students must not only identify the author's purpose, but they must also explain that purpose in their own words.

Skill

Identifying the Author's Purpose

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions



1. Circle the correct answer. What was the author's purpose for writing "Hoffman's Sloth"?

- A. to persuade us to like the sloth
- B. to inform us about the sloth
- C. to tell a story about the sloth

2. Tell at least two things that made you choose this answer.

Bonus: Color the sloth on page 45. What color should it be? (Hint: The author informed you about the color.)