

Listening Comprehension

by Carol Richards

For the article:

Unforgiven – crows can hold grudges for 17 years

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Topics: science • animals • behavioural studies

Skills: listening comprehension • vocabulary (online H5P exercise)

Formats: multiple choice

Classroom activities: individual work

Answers: see page 3

Language variety: British English

Listening Comprehension

Instructions: You will hear the recording of a newspaper article. Before you listen to the recording, read through the multiple choice questions and highlight important keywords. You will then hear the recording and answer the questions. You will have time to listen to the recording again and check your answers. Mark (✓) the correct box that best and most accurately fits the question. There is only one correct answer to each question.

Vocabulary: murder of crows Krähenschwarm

1. What did a scientist discover about crows?

- ☐ They are angry for a few months.
- ☐ Some forgive and forget, others don't.
- ☐ They can hold grudges for almost two decades.
- ☐ They tend to only hold grudges against humans.

2. A crow attacks you. What should you ask yourself according to the report?

- ☐ Where can I find cover?
- ☐ Am I near a crow's nest?
- ☐ Have I stepped on their food?
- ☐ Did I harm a crow or its relatives in the past?

3. What is one special reason why crows are able to remember threatening behaviour?

- ☐ They are very clever.
- ☐ They can predict human behaviour.
- ☐ They have an exceptional memory for faces.
- ☐ They have a heightened sense of smell and hearing.

4. What field of study does Professor Marzluff work in?

- ☐ animal science
- ☐ zoological science
- ☐ behavioural science
- ☐ environmental science

5. What did Marzluff discover during his experiment?

- ☐ Crows prefer to avoid humans.
- ☐ Crows remember stressful incidents.
- ☐ Crows are traumatized by natural predators.
- ☐ Crows can only vaguely distinguish human faces.

6. What did the researchers notice when they later wore the ogre masks again?

- ☐ Most crows ignored them.
- ☐ Many crows flew away from them.
- ☐ Crows who didn't see the mask in 2006 attacked them.
- ☐ Only the few crows who originally saw the masks in 2006 reacted.

7. How do crows get information about humans that are threatening?

- ☐ They assume most humans are threatening.
- ☐ They learn from crows they know personally.
- ☐ Their knowledge is more instinct than learning.
- ☐ They teach other crows both within and outside of their murder.

8. What happened to the number of scolding calls over time?

- ☐ They reached their peak after seven years.
- ☐ They stayed consistent throughout the experiment.
- ☐ They decreased immediately after the initial incident.
- ☐ They steadily increased until the end of the experiment.

9. What did Marzluff discover about the crow's brain?

- ☐ It is very different from a mammal's brain.
- ☐ It has a region that stores negative memories.
- ☐ It responds very little to fear or negative stimuli.
- ☐ Its memories function better than those in a human brain.

10. What was Marzluff most surprised about?

- ☐ Crows observe human actions closely.
- ☐ Crows see humans as natural enemies.
- ☐ Crows communicate with other species.
- ☐ Crows pay little attention to other animals.

Vocabulary (optional)



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Collective nouns for specific groups of animals

In the subhead, the phrase “murder of crows” appears. English can be a fun but strange language. One thing that non-native speakers occasionally find a little strange are the many different collective nouns in English for specific groups of animals. In the word bank below, you will find different collective nouns. Write the correct noun in the blank spaces.

Keep in mind that these collective nouns for groups of animals always follow the same grammatical pattern, for example, “a murder of crows” because a “crow’s murder” would mean something else entirely.

Word Bank

clowder • clutch • colony • gaggle •
herd • litter • mob • pack •
pride • rookery • school • skein

1. a _____ of antelopes, horses, or goats
2. a _____ of ants or rabbits
3. a _____ of cats
4. a _____ of dogs or wolves
5. a _____ of ducks, geese, or other birds when they are flying
6. a _____ of eggs
7. a _____ of fish
8. a _____ of geese when they are on the ground
9. a _____ of kangaroos
10. a _____ of lions
11. a _____ of puppies, kittens, or bear cubs
12. a _____ of seals or penguins

Answer Key

Listening Comprehension

1. ☒ They can hold grudges for almost two decades. (headline, para. 1)
2. ☒ Did I harm a crow or its relatives in the past? (para. 2)
3. ☒ They have an exceptional memory for faces. (para. 2)
4. ☒ environmental science (para. 4)
5. ☒ Crows remember stressful incidents. (para. 4)
6. ☒ Crows who didn't see the mask in 2006 attacked them. (para. 5)
7. ☒ They learn from crows they know personally. (para. 5)
8. ☒ They reached their peak after seven years. (para. 6)
9. ☒ It has a region that stores negative memories. (para. 7)
10. ☒ Crows observe human actions closely. (para. 7)

Vocabulary (optional)

1. a **herd** of antelopes, horses, or goats
2. a **colony** of ants or rabbits
3. a **clowder** of cats
4. a **pack** of dogs or wolves
5. a **skein** of ducks, geese, or other birds when they are flying
6. a **clutch** of eggs
7. a **school** of fish
8. a **gaggle** of geese when they are on the ground
9. a **mob** of kangaroos
10. a **pride** of lions
11. a **litter** of puppies, kittens, or bear cubs
12. a **rookery** of seals or penguins



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