



How the Rhinoceros got his Skin by Rudyard Kipling

Before reading

- 1 Check students know the names of the animals and the vocabulary. Students match the animal to the characteristics.

Answers

1 b 2 e 3 f 4 c 5 d 6 a

- 2a Elicit the meaning of origin (the place or moment where something begins to exist). In pairs, students decide what an origin story might be.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Kipling is not the first person to write this kind of story. Origin stories or myths, have been told for thousands of years around the world. They always deal with how certain things came about as a 'back story' to something that exists now. Fantasy is a key element of the 'Just So Stories': in this story, it is the fact that the rhinoceros can undo three buttons on its skin to remove it, like a coat.

- 2b Discuss students' answer to exercise 2a, then ask them to read *About the story* to check their answer. Elicit what this story explains (why rhinoceroses have wrinkly skin).

Answer

c

- 3 In pairs, students discuss their ideas. Listen to some of their predictions as a class but don't confirm any of their ideas yet.

While reading

- 1 Students now read the story, referring to the Vocabulary focus box for help with any words they may not know. They put the events in the correct order. Students can check answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Answers

1 h 2 d 3 c 4 a 5 b 6 g 7 f 8 e

- 2 Students answer the questions. When you check answers, ask them to tell you the line from the text where they found the answer (in italics in Answers below).

Answers

- 1 It was big. (... *which was a metre wide*)
- 2 Probably because he was scared.
- 3 It is a mistake to take someone else's cake.
- 4 Probably because he thought of something that he could do to the rhinoceros.
- 5 It didn't help him, and he got folds in his skin. (... *that didn't help ... great big folds of skin ... still didn't help*)
- 6 Because he was itchy and he couldn't stop the itching.

- 3 Students look back at the text and find words to describe the rhinoceros's appearance and personality at the beginning and end of the story.

Answers

Appearance at the beginning	Appearance at the end
tight skin with no wrinkles, small eyes, a horn	loose skin with big folds in it
Personality at the beginning	Personality at the end
no manners (i.e. rude)	bad-tempered and angry

- 4 Students find a simile to describe the rhinoceros's skin with the cake crumbs.

Answer

... *it tickled like cake crumbs in bed.*

After reading

- 1 Ask students to work in groups to discuss the moral of the story. Listen to their ideas as a class.

Suggested answer

Don't take other people's things.

- 2 Students now work in pairs to start thinking of ideas for their own origin story. First, they think of another animal and a key characteristic.
- 3 In their pairs, students now invent a reason why the animal got that characteristic. They should then complete the table with other details about the story. Monitor and help with language and ideas as needed.
- 4 Pairs now practise telling their story together. They can draw a storyboard first if they wish. Encourage confident pairs to tell their story to the rest of the class.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

If students are interested in this kind of story, have them find one of the other, *Just So Stories*, on the Internet. Students read the story and find out how the animal in the title came to be. Is there a moral to that story?