



"Zip, zap, zoom!" Meet the ground squirrel, a feisty little creature that loves to dart around in the grasslands and forests. These cute critters are covered in fur that comes in shades of brown, grey, and sometimes black, which helps them blend into their surroundings. They are usually about 9 to 11 inches long, which is about the size of a big ruler, and they have bushy tails that add another 5 to 9 inches to their length. Ground squirrels have strong legs that are just perfect for digging burrows and running fast when they need to.

Speaking of burrows, let's talk about where these fun-loving animals live. Ground squirrels make their homes in burrows, which are like tunnels under the ground. These burrows are not only their homes, but also their hiding places from predators like foxes and hawks. You'll find these burrows in a variety of places, like grasslands, forests, and even in your own backyard if you live near their wild habitats!

Just like us, ground squirrels need food to stay healthy and active. They are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and small animals. Their diet includes nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and sometimes insects and small birds. But did you know they hibernate in winter? They store food in their burrows to eat when they wake up in the spring.



Ground squirrels have a pretty cool life cycle and relationship with humans and other animals. Did you know that they hibernate in winter and wake up in spring? When they wake up, it's time to find a mate and have babies! While they might be a little naughty by digging holes in lawns, they also eat harmful insects, helping us in their own little way. And let's not forget, their alert calls warning of predators are a great help to other animals too. So, that's the story of the ground squirrel, a small animal with a big personality!



**Solve each problem.**

**Use the article to answer the question.**

- 1) Why are ground squirrels sometimes considered helpful to humans?
  - A. They are great climbers
  - B. They are good pets
  - C. They eat harmful insects
  - D. They keep larger animals away from homes
- 2) Where do ground squirrels make their homes?
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- 3) What do ground squirrels use their strong legs for?
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  - A. Only plants
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  - A. In the spring
  - B. In the summer
  - C. In the winter
  - D. In the fall
- 6) What color does the fur of a ground squirrel come in?
  - A. Green, Orange, and Purple
  - B. Red, Yellow, and Blue
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- 7) Who are the predators of ground squirrels?
  - A. Wolves and Owls
  - B. Foxes and Hawks
  - C. Tigers and Vultures
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- 8) What do ground squirrels do during the winter?
  - A. They do not change their habits
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  - C. They hibernate
  - D. They build nests in dense shrubs

**Determine if the statements is something the animal would say (W) or it it is not something the animal would say (N).**

- 9) "I travel south during the winter."
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- 16) "I help spread seeds when I bury my food. Nature's little gardener, that's me!"

- 17) "My fur changes color to green in the summer, to blend with the grass."
- 18) "Before hibernating, I don't gather any food. I find fresh food in the middle of winter."
- 19) "My menu is quite diverse because I eat plants and small animals."

**Determine if the statement is a fact or opinion based on the information in the article.**

- 20) Ground squirrels usually have brown, grey or black coloured fur.
- 21) Ground squirrels are the cutest when they stand on their hind legs, showing off their long tails.
- 22) Ground squirrels hibernate during winter months.
- 23) Ground squirrels eating small birds is the most interesting thing about their diet.
- 24) Burrows, used as homes and safe places from predators, are where ground squirrels usually live.
- 25) Ground squirrels are annoying because they eat plants and damage gardens.
- 26) Ground squirrels store food in their burrows to eat during hibernation in winter
- 27) Ground squirrels eat a combination of plants and animals.
- 28) Ground squirrels are the best animals to watch because they are always so active.
- 29) It is quite extraordinary how ground squirrels store food in their burrows for the whole winter.

**Determine if the statement is true or false.**

- 30) Ground squirrels warn other animals of predators with their calls.
- 31) Ground squirrels make their homes high in trees.
- 32) Ground squirrels are omnivores.
- 33) Ground squirrels eat only small animals.
- 34) Not only do ground squirrels eat nuts and fruits, they also eat small birds.
- 35) Ground squirrels hibernate in the summer.
- 36) Ground squirrels are carnivores.
- 37) Ground squirrels are usually 4 to 6 feet long.
- 38) Ground squirrels are usually shades of brown, grey or black.
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**Determine which choice is the expanded form of the underlined contraction.**

- 40) They're known for their bushy tails.  
A. there are  
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- 42) Ground squirrels aren't just one color.  
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|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 26. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 27. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 28. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 29. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 30. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 31. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 32. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 33. _____ |
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| 10. _____ | 35. _____ |
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| 12. _____ | 37. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 38. _____ |
| 14. _____ | 39. _____ |
| 15. _____ | 40. _____ |
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| 20. _____ | 45. _____ |
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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <u>          <b>C</b>          </u>        | 26. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>          |
| 2. <u>          <b>D</b>          </u>        | 27. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>          |
| 3. <u>          <b>D</b>          </u>        | 28. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 4. <u>          <b>C</b>          </u>        | 29. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u>       |
| 5. <u>          <b>A</b>          </u>        | 30. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 6. <u>          <b>D</b>          </u>        | 31. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 7. <u>          <b>B</b>          </u>        | 32. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 8. <u>          <b>C</b>          </u>        | 33. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 9. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>    | 34. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
| 10. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>    | 35. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 11. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 36. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
| 12. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 37. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>         |
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| 14. <u>          <b>false</b>          </u>   | 39. <u>          <b>true</b>          </u>          |
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| 20. <u>          <b>fact</b>          </u>    | 45. <u>          <b>declarative</b>          </u>   |
| 21. <u>          <b>opinion</b>          </u> | 46. <u>          <b>interrogative</b>          </u> |
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