

Name _____

DIRECTIONS: As you read, think about the main idea of the different texts. Then answer the questions.

A.

"You all see what a black coat Buster has," said Old Mother Nature.

"Now I'm going to tell you something which may surprise you. Just as there are Red Foxes that are black, so there are Black Bears that are brown."

"What's that?" grunted Buster, with the funniest look of surprise on his face.

"It's a fact, Buster," said Old Mother Nature. "A great many of your family live out in the mountains of the Far West, and there quite often there will be one who is all brown. People used to think that these brown Bears were a different kind of Bear, and called them Cinnamon Bears. It was a long, long time before it was found out that those brown Bears are really black Bears. Sometimes one of the twin babies will be all black and the other all brown. Sometimes one of Buster's family will have a white spot on his breast. Buster's branch of the family is found in nearly all of the wooded parts of the entire country. In the Sunny South they live in the swamps and do not grow as big as in the North. Buster, there is a soft spot on the ground; I want you to walk across it so that these little folks can see your footprints."

Good-naturedly Buster dropped on all fours and walked across the soft spot. Right away everyone understood why Old Mother Nature had asked Buster to do this. The prints of his hind feet were very like the prints of Farmer Brown's boy when barefooted, only of course very much larger. You see, they showed the print of the heel as well as the rest of the foot.

"You see," said Old Mother Nature, "Buster puts his whole foot on the ground, while all members of the Dog and Cat families walk wholly on their toes. Animals that put the whole foot down are called plantigrade."

From *The Burgess Animal Book for Children* by Thornton W. Burgess

B.

In animals that walk on the earth (as opposed to animals that fly), plantigrade locomotion means that the animal walks with its toes and metatarsals flat on the ground. Plantigrade locomotion is one of three forms of terrestrial locomotion. The other two are digitigrade, walking on the toes only, with the heel and wrist permanently raised, and unguligrade, walking on the nail (i.e., hoof) with the heel/wrist and the digit permanently raised. Most extinct early mammals were plantigrade. A plantigrade foot predates the other two forms in evolution.

Name _____

1. Think about the information you have read in both texts. What does *plantigrade* mean?

- a. putting your whole foot down on the ground when you walk
- b. walking on your toes
- c. walking on your nails

2. Based on the texts, what is an example of an animal that uses plantigrade locomotion?

- a. a horse
- b. a bear
- c. a bird

3. The author's approach the topic of explaining plantigrade locomotion In very different ways. Explain.

4. Think about what you have read. List at least three other creatures that are examples of plantigrade locomotion.

ANSWERS

1. A

2. B

3. In passage A the author delivers the information as part of a story, with characters demonstrating the definition of plantigrade. Passage is very direct and objective, more like an encyclopedia entry.

4. May Vary: human, dog, cat, etc.