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The Praying Mantis

This insect is helpful to humans.

The praying mantis is quite a sight to see. While it is resting or when it is getting ready to attack its prey, this mantis folds its front legs as if it were praying.

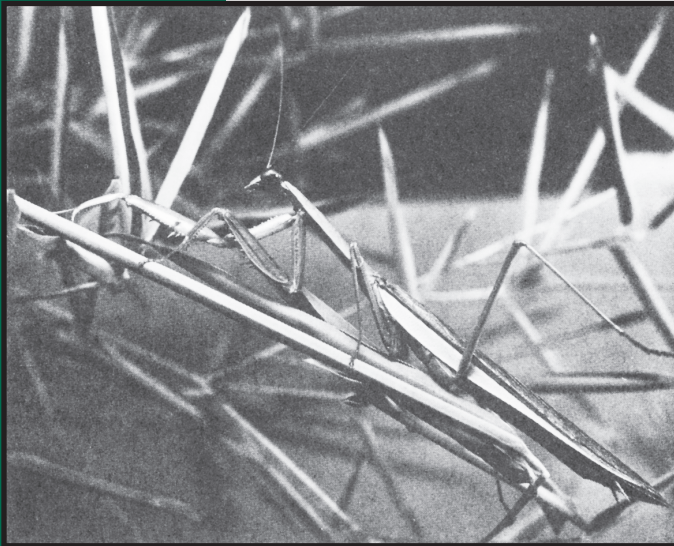
There are about 1,700 known species, or kinds, of mantises. Most mantises are green, brown, or gray. But certain species are brightly colored. The mantis is a predator (prĕd'ə tər), an animal that lives by feeding on other animal life. This predator eats all sorts of insects, including harmful garden insects that chew up plants.

The female mantis lays her eggs, one at a time, in a cocoon (kə kōon'). The cocoon is made of a foam-like material that flows from the female's body. It hardens into different shapes. The female produces several cocoons and always attaches them to something, like a stone, a twig, or a leaf. A single cocoon may hold 50 to 400 eggs!

The mantis's eggs spend the winter in the cocoon and hatch in the spring. Then it takes the mantis about 3 to 5 months to develop fully. As adults, these predatory insects

live only for a few months.

The mantis is often invisible both to its enemies and to its prey. Some praying mantises look like green or brown leaves, and others look like flowers. All in all, the mantis is one of the animal world's most interesting insects.



QUESTIONS

1. The word in the story that describes an animal that feeds on other animals is _____.
2. The female mantis usually produces
 - a. less than 50 eggs.
 - b. at least 400 cocoons.
 - c. more than one cocoon.
3. What does the praying mantis do that makes it look as if it were praying?
 - a. It folds its front legs.
 - b. It changes color from brown to green.
 - c. It makes cocoons for its eggs.
4. The story says that the praying mantis is often invisible to its enemies and its prey. How is this possible?
 - a. It is able to disappear completely from view.
 - b. It may be mistaken for a leaf that is similar in shape and color.
 - c. It is small enough to hide under stones when an enemy is nearby.
5. The praying mantis is fully developed when it hatches.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. The story does not say.
6. Suppose you found a praying mantis in your garden. What would be the best thing to do?
 - a. Chase it away before it eats the plants.
 - b. Ignore it and let it stay in the garden.
 - c. Kill it, because it will harm other insects.

Lana Learns to Talk

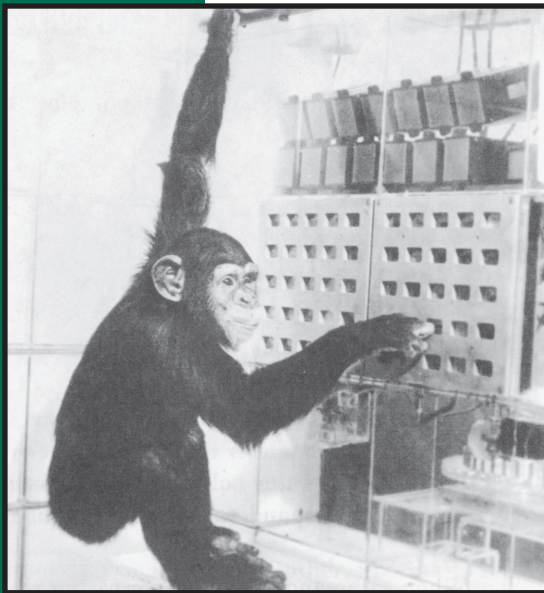
Lana is smart. She asks for food, and she even asks for music. What is strange about that?

Lana is a chimpanzee that uses a computer (kəm pyōō'tər) to “talk.” To do this, Lana must use a special language made up of pictures and symbols that stand for words. If Lana wants a banana, she simply pushes a button on the computer. The correct button has a picture that stands for banana. So if Lana pushes that button, the computer gives her a banana.

Lana can even “write” sentences. The sentences may not contain all the words that a human would use when talking. But each sentence must make sense in order for Lana to be understood. Suppose Lana wants milk and she punches out *Please, machine, make milk*. Lana will not get the milk. She must first correct the sentence. When she punches out *Please, machine, give milk*, Lana gets her milk.

Lana's trainer is also her friend. They communicate (kə myōō'nə kāt'), or exchange information, with each

other by using the computer. Lana started to use the computer to communicate when she was only 3 years old. She won't be fully grown until she is between 12 and 16 years old. So there is still a lot more Lana can learn. Now that she knows something about letters, scientists are testing her ability with numbers. What scientists are learning from Lana is being used to help people with language problems.



QUESTIONS

1. The word in the story that means to “exchange information” is _____.
2. To talk to her trainer, Lana must use a machine called a _____.
3. Lana’s sentences are made up of all the words that humans would use when talking.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. The story does not say.
4. What might happen because of what the research scientists are doing with chimps like Lana?
 - a. Humans who have trouble communicating are being helped.
 - b. Chimps may talk using complete sentences.
 - c. Humans will learn to speak to chimps without computers.
5. Before Lana could use the computer, it was necessary for her to
 - a. learn to identify certain pictures and symbols.
 - b. read and write many words and sentences.
 - c. learn how to talk with scientists.
6. If Lana wanted to play a game of catch with her friend, which sentence would she punch into the computer?
 - a. Please, friend, play catch with Lana.
 - b. Lana wants machine play catch.
 - c. Friend wants play game, Lana.