



Just like magic, the pygmy shrew zips through the underbrush, barely visible to the naked eye. These tiny creatures are the smallest mammals known to us, weighing less than a dime and being only about the size of your thumb. Their fur is a soft, velvety brown color, which helps them blend in with their surroundings. They have a pointy snout, tiny eyes, and ears that are almost hidden by their fur.

Remember how we said they're excellent at blending in? Well, that's because they live in places like fields, forests, and gardens all around Europe, North America, and Asia. In their little homes, they feast on a buffet of insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates. In fact, they eat so much that they need to consume 2 to 3 times their body weight in food each day!

Now, imagine eating that much, you'd probably be very sleepy, right? Well, pygmy shrews don't have much time for sleep, they're too busy living their life cycle. They're born in the spring, grow quickly, and by summer, they're ready to have little shrews of their own. Despite their small size, they're fearless, using their sharp teeth to defend themselves from threats.



Speaking of threats, did you know that pygmy shrews have a special trick? Their saliva is venomous, which helps them to paralyze their prey and defend against predators. This makes them different from other shrew species, which can't do this. So, next time you're exploring the great outdoors, remember to respect these small but mighty creatures.



**Solve each problem.**

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

- 1) What do pygmy shrews eat?
  - A. Fish and birds
  - B. Seeds and nuts
  - C. Insects, spiders, and small invertebrates
  - D. Leaves and berries
- 2) Which is a place pygmy shrews might live?
  - A. Beaches and oceans
  - B. Mountains and caves
  - C. Deserts and dunes
  - D. Fields and forests
- 3) What is special about a pygmy shrew's saliva?
  - A. It's venomous
  - B. It's sweet
  - C. It's always cold
  - D. It's colorless
- 4) When are pygmy shrews ready to have babies?
  - A. One week after being born
  - B. After just a year
  - C. As soon as they're born
  - D. One season after being born
- 5) When are pygmy shrews generally born?
  - A. In the spring
  - B. In the winter
  - C. In the summer
  - D. In the fall
- 6) What is interesting about how much pygmy shrews eat?
  - A. They eat their body weight in food a day.
  - B. They eat up to three times their body weight each day.
  - C. They go weeks without eating.
  - D. They eat half their body weight per day.
- 7) What sets pygmy shrews apart from other shrew species?
  - A. Their color
  - B. Their saliva
  - C. Their diet
  - D. Their size
- 8) What color is the fur of a pygmy shrew?
  - A. Gray
  - B. Black
  - C. Brown
  - D. White
- 9) How do pygmy shrews defend themselves?
  - A. Through camouflage
  - B. By releasing a foul smell
  - C. Using their sharp teeth
  - D. With their strong muscles
- 10) How big is a pygmy shrew?
  - A. As big as a mouse
  - B. The size of your thumb
  - C. The size of a cat
  - D. The size of a hand

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

- 11) "My fur changes color based on the seasons, just like a chameleon."



- 12) "I survive on an all-insect diet, including spiders and other tiny creepy crawlies."
- 13) "Now, let me tell you, we pygmy shrews eat 2 to 3 times our body weight in food every day, that's a lot!"
- 14) "My saliva can paralyze my prey and protect me from predators."
- 15) "We prefer to hang out in the desert, it's nice and warm."
- 16) "We love long sleeps, especially after a big meal."
- 17) "I don't really like to eat much, just a little bite now and then."
- 18) "We barely eat, don't need much food to survive."
- 19) "We're born in winter and enjoy the cold."
- 20) "I live in places like fields, forests, and even gardens in Europe, North America, and Asia."
- 21) "I'm pretty big for a mammal, almost the size of a cat."
- 22) "Guess what? I'm one of the smallest animals on the planet, tinier than a dime!"

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

- 23) Pygmy shrews eat about 2 to 3 times their own body weight in food every day.
- 24) Pygmy shrews are more interesting than other shrew species because they have venomous saliva.
- 25) Pygmy shrews eat insects, spiders, and small invertebrates.
- 26) Pygmy shrews, with their pointy snout and tiny eyes, are the more adorable than any other mammals.
- 27) Pygmy shrews are the smallest mammals known to humans.
- 28) The sharp teeth of the pygmy shrew make it look a bit scary despite its tiny size.
- 29) Pygmy shrews usually give birth during the spring season.
- 30) Pygmy shrews can be found in places like fields, gardens, forests.
- 31) It's amazing that the pygmy shrew, being so tiny, is able to eat 2 to 3 times its body weight in food each day!
- 32) The way pygmy shrews use their sharp teeth to defend themselves from threats is very cool.

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

- 33) Pygmy shrews are usually born in the spring.
- 34) Pygmy shrews only eat plants.
- 35) Pygmy shrews live in forests, fields, and gardens.
- 36) Pygmy shrews are the largest mammals known to humans.
- 37) Pygmy shrews eat insects and spiders.
- 38) Pygmy shrews only live in South America.
- 39) Pygmy shrews are only found in forests.
- 40) Pygmy shrews are born during the summer.
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**Determine which choice is the expanded form of the underlined contraction.**

- 43) Pygmy shrews can't fly, but they can climb trees!  
A. can able B. cannot  
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- 44) They've got a special bite that helps them catch their food.  
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**Determine if the sentence is a declarative(d), exclamatory(e), interrogative(i) or imperative(m).**

- 48) Pygmy shrews are known for their high metabolism, requiring them to eat almost their own body weight in food every day.
- 49) Can pygmy shrews swim?
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- 51) Pygmy shrews have a short lifespan of only about 1 to 2 years.
- 52) Are pygmy shrews endangered?
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|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 26. _____ | 51. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 27. _____ | 52. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 28. _____ | 53. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 29. _____ |           |
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| 10. _____ | 35. _____ |           |
| 11. _____ | 36. _____ |           |
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| 17. _____ | 42. _____ |           |
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- |                           |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| 2. <u><b>D</b></u>        | 27. <u><b>fact</b></u>          | 52. <u><b>interrogative</b></u> |
| 3. <u><b>A</b></u>        | 28. <u><b>opinion</b></u>       | 53. <u><b>interrogative</b></u> |
| 4. <u><b>D</b></u>        | 29. <u><b>fact</b></u>          |                                 |
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| 7. <u><b>B</b></u>        | 32. <u><b>opinion</b></u>       |                                 |
| 8. <u><b>C</b></u>        | 33. <u><b>true</b></u>          |                                 |
| 9. <u><b>C</b></u>        | 34. <u><b>false</b></u>         |                                 |
| 10. <u><b>B</b></u>       | 35. <u><b>true</b></u>          |                                 |
| 11. <u><b>false</b></u>   | 36. <u><b>false</b></u>         |                                 |
| 12. <u><b>true</b></u>    | 37. <u><b>true</b></u>          |                                 |
| 13. <u><b>true</b></u>    | 38. <u><b>false</b></u>         |                                 |
| 14. <u><b>true</b></u>    | 39. <u><b>false</b></u>         |                                 |
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| 20. <u><b>true</b></u>    | 45. <u><b>D</b></u>             |                                 |
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| 23. <u><b>fact</b></u>    | 48. <u><b>declarative</b></u>   |                                 |
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