

# Red Tide

Red tide is a phenomenon that is harming coastal waters throughout the world. It is caused by algal blooms. It is called red tide because algae become so concentrated that it discolors the water, turning it to a reddish-brown hue. Many factors contribute to the occurrence of red tide. Sunlight, warm ocean temperatures, water salinity, and ocean currents play a role.

A red tide is harmful in many ways. The algal bloom depletes the water of oxygen and it produces a harmful toxin. The toxin can prevent fish from respirating properly. If the toxin goes airborne, it can also be dangerous for humans with respiratory problems. The long term effects of breathing in these toxins are unknown, so lifeguards sometimes choose to wear masks if they are working in an area with red tide.

The coastline's food chain is also affected by red tide. Grazers, such as krill and small fish, are unaffected by the toxins, so they eat the algae. However, the larger fish that eat the grazers are poisoned by the high level of toxins. Shellfish are known to carry the toxin. The deaths of many large fish and mammals have been attributed to the consumption of shellfish during a red tide.

A red tide can have adverse consequences for people, as well. When a red tide occurs, tourists stop visiting the beach. As a result, the businesses along the coastline suffer. It is not safe for humans to eat shellfish, so the companies who gather shellfish suffer, too.

Currently, not much can be done to stop a red tide. Scientists are working on solutions, but it still might be several years before we see a resolution to this harmful event.

**1 MAIN IDEA** Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?

- A. If you see a lifeguard wearing a mask, it might mean that a red tide has affected the coastline.
- B. A red tide happens when the water turns reddish-brown.
- C. When a red tide occurs along a coastline, it results in negative consequences for both marine life and people.

**2 CAUSE AND EFFECT** How does a red tide affect business owners along the coastline?

- A. Tourists spend time in their stores rather than on the beach, so business improves.
- B. Tourists stop visiting their coastline, so business declines.
- C. Many new businesses open.
- D. Business improves because many surfers come to the area for the unique surfing experience.

**3** Underline **TEXT EVIDENCE** that supports your answer to this question: Which of the following does **NOT** contribute to a red tide occurrence?

- A. overfishing in protected areas
- B. sunlight
- C. warm ocean temperatures
- D. ocean currents

**4 TEXT STRUCTURE** Identify the text structure used in this passage.

- A. description
- B. cause and effect
- C. sequence
- D. problem and solution
- E. compare and contrast

**5 VOCABULARY** What is the meaning of the prefix in "discolor"?

- A. the opposite of
- B. without
- C. to remove
- D. before

**6 CONTEXT CLUES** What does "adverse" mean in this passage?

- A. a type of verse
- B. mysterious or unknown
- C. negative or harmful
- D. positive or helpful

# North American Explorers

Archeologists believe that the first explorers of the North American continent arrived about 50,000 years ago. They journeyed from Asia on foot or by boat. Those first explorers were the American Indians. Over thousands of years, they spread out across the entire continent of North America. They split into tribes and discovered ways to live in a variety of different landscapes and climates.

In the 1500s, a new group of explorers arrived in North America. As Spanish, English, and French explorers arrived, they upended the American Indians' way of life in many ways. The most immediate negative effect was the disease that the explorers brought to North America. European explorers and colonists brought new diseases such as smallpox, measles, chicken pox, and influenza to North America. The American Indians had no immunity against these new diseases. As a result, many American Indians perished within short periods of time.

In 1585, English explorer Thomas Harriot wrote, "Within a few days of our departure from every such [Indian] town, the people began to die very fast, and many in a short space." Neither the Europeans nor the Indians expected this outcome. They didn't understand what was causing the deaths. Therefore, neither group knew how to stop the deaths from happening.

Experts now believe that nearly 90% of the American Indian population may have died from the diseases carried by the Europeans. The devastating effects of disease on the American Indian population is a major part of the story of North American history.

**1 MAIN IDEA** Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?

- A. American Indians explored North America before Europeans.
- B. The first American Indians came from Asia, whereas the later explorers came from Europe.
- C. When European explorers arrived in North America, they brought new diseases that killed many American Indians.

**2 CAUSE AND EFFECT** Why did the American Indians die from the diseases, while the explorers remained unaffected?

- A. The explorers didn't share their medicine with the Indians.
- B. The explorers were older than the Indians.
- C. The explorers had built an immunity to the diseases, while the American Indians had no immunity.

**3** Underline **TEXT EVIDENCE** that supports your answer to this question: Which disease was not brought to North America by the European explorers and colonists?

- A. small pox
- B. measles
- C. cancer
- D. influenza

**4 TEXT STRUCTURE** Identify the text structure used in the second paragraph.

- A. description
- B. cause and effect
- C. sequence
- D. problem and solution
- E. compare and contrast

**5 VOCABULARY** What does the suffix in "explorers" mean?

- A. a person who
- B. more
- C. the opposite of
- D. characterized by

**6 CONTEXT CLUES** What does "perish" mean in this passage?

- A. to become infected with a disease
- B. to die
- C. to recover from a disease
- D. to build up enough strength to fight a disease

# The Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta

Have you ever spotted a hot air balloon drifting across the sky? Most would agree that it's a breathtaking sight. Now imagine the sight of more than 500 balloons ascending into the sky! This scene happens each year at the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta. Not only is the Balloon Fiesta the largest ballooning event in the world, but it is also the most photographed event on the entire planet!

Balloonists from all over the world travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to participate in the Balloon Fiesta. It takes place in early October because the cool morning and evening temperatures are perfect for a balloon launch. Also, the city is known for the "Albuquerque Box", a term used to describe the ideal weather patterns and geography that allow the balloonists to have an unusual amount of control over their balloons.

The first balloon event in Albuquerque took place in 1972. On April 8<sup>th</sup> of that year, thirteen balloons launched from a shopping center parking lot. It was part of a promotion organized by a local radio station. The event grew in popularity with each passing year. In recent years, 500 balloons have been launched, and more than 850,000 people have attended the Balloon Fiesta.

One of the most popular events to attend is the mass ascension. During this event, balloons launch in two waves, starting at 7:00 A.M. The lead balloon carries the American flag and takes off while America's national anthem is played. All of the balloons are launched within two hours of the lead balloon. As you can imagine, it is truly an astonishing and unforgettable sight!

**1 MAIN IDEA**— Which detail best supports the main idea and could be added to this passage?

- A. Albuquerque is the largest city in the state of New Mexico.
- B. The Balloon Fiesta made the Guinness Book of World Records in 2011 for launching the most balloons in the shortest period of time.
- C. Pilatre De Rozier launched the first hot air balloon on September 19, 1783.

**2 CAUSE AND EFFECT**— Why is the Balloon Fiesta held in October?

- A. The temperatures are ideal at this time of the year.
- B. October is the best time for taking photographs of the event.
- C. Since the first one took place in October, they schedule it then to keep up the tradition.
- D. There is no chance for rainfall in Albuquerque in October.

**3** Underline **TEXT EVIDENCE** that supports your answer to this question: What is the "Albuquerque Box"?

- A. the parking lot where the balloons are launched
- B. the stereo that plays the national anthem
- C. the weather and geography that makes this city a great place to fly a balloon
- D. the basket below each balloon

**4 TEXT STRUCTURE**— Identify the text structure used in the second paragraph.

- A. description
- B. cause and effect
- C. sequence
- D. problem and solution
- E. compare and contrast

**5 VOCABULARY**— Which word contains an affix that means "most"?

- A. popularity
- B. promotion
- C. unforgettable
- D. largest

**6 CONTEXT CLUES**— What does "ascension" mean in this passage?

- A. a collection of many things
- B. to observe something carefully
- C. moving in a sideways direction
- D. moving in an upward direction

# Lizards and Salamanders

Lizards and salamanders are commonly confused. They both have long bodies and long tails, and they crawl around on four short legs with their bellies close to the ground. Many people assume they are close relatives since they look so much alike. However, looks can be deceiving! Lizards are closer cousins to humans than they are to salamanders!

The most obvious difference between lizards and salamanders is their outer covering. Lizards are reptiles, like snakes. Therefore, lizards are covered in scales. In contrast, salamanders are amphibians, like frogs. As a result, salamanders have skin that is smooth and slimy. You can also easily differentiate the two animals by looking at their ears and feet. Lizards have external ear openings and clawed toes. Salamanders, on the other hand, lack these characteristics.

These two animals also lay eggs in different ways. Female lizards lay shelled-eggs. After selecting a location, they usually dig a hole and bury up to twenty eggs in the ground. After about eleven weeks, the hatchlings emerge. The life cycle of a salamander is quite different. Female salamanders lay up to 450 clear, jelly-like eggs in the water. Like frogs, they are born without legs, but their legs grow as they age.

As you can see, salamanders and lizards may look similar but they are quite different. Once you understand how they are different, you can easily identify each one.

**1 MAIN IDEA** Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?

- A. Female salamanders lay many more eggs than female lizards.
- B. Although they look somewhat similar, lizards and salamanders are very different animals.
- C. Lizards are closer cousins to humans than they are to salamanders.

**2 CONTEXT CLUES** What does "deceiving" mean in this passage?

- A. when something is clarified so that it is easier to understand
- B. to receive information
- C. when something is misleading and causes people to believe something that isn't true
- D. to give information

**3** Underline **TEXT EVIDENCE** that supports your answer to this question: Which body part would NOT help you determine whether an animal is a lizard or a salamander?

- A. toes
- B. back
- C. ears
- D. eyes

**4 TEXT STRUCTURE** Identify the text structure used in this passage.

- A. description
- B. cause and effect
- C. sequence
- D. problem and solution
- E. compare and contrast

**5 VOCABULARY** Which of the following pair of words are antonyms?

- A. external; outside
- B. short; some
- C. bury; emerge
- D. clear; transparent

**6 CAUSE AND EFFECT** Why do salamanders have smooth, slimy skin?

- A. They are amphibians.
- B. They are lizards.
- C. They spend most of their time in the sun.
- D. They spend most of their time digging holes.