# **Animal Behavior Discussion Guide (for use during or after reading)**

1. How do instincts help animals survive? (Instinct and Survival, p. 8-9)
   1. Instincts come from the genetic makeup of the organism. Because of that, they are specific to each animal. Spiders know how to (and know they should) spin webs. This instinctual knowledge keeps them alive because it helps them catch prey. Mice, on the other hand, avoid areas that smell like cats because they have an instinct to fear them.
2. Which types of animals are good at learning new behaviors? Which types rely more on their instincts? (Learned Behaviors, p. 10-11)
   1. Birds and mammals both have instincts but have the highest capacity to learn new behaviors. Smaller animals such as insects or spiders rely on their instincts the most. They have the least capacity to learn behaviors. Amphibians, fish, and reptiles are in the middle. They might be able to learn some behaviors but mostly rely on instincts to survive.
3. Why might it be beneficial for animals to live in groups? (Group Behavior, p.15-19)
   1. Living in groups benefits animals in many ways. First, groups help animals raise their young. Second, they can work together to defend themselves and find safe spaces for shelter. Groups can also more easily find safe food than individuals. Sometimes, living in groups can provide protection from predators.
4. How does group behavior benefit predators? Use an example to support your answer. (Group Behavior, p. 15-19)
   1. Predators can also benefit from group behavior because they are more successful as a team. For example, they can work together to tire out larger prey. Sometimes predators can even work together to set a trap for prey. Working together, predators can also separate individual prey from its group.
5. Why is finding or making shelter considered an instinctive behavior for many animals? (Shelter, p. 20-21)
   1. Finding or making shelter is considered an instinctive behavior for many animals because shelter is often key to survival. Shelter can provide protection from predators and a safe space to raise young.
6. What types of animals migrate? Why do they do this? (Migration, p. 22-23)
   1. Many animals migrate including birds, wildebeest, gazelles, and zebra.
7. Why do animals hibernate? (Hibernation, p. 24-25)
   1. Animals hibernate because of hard conditions. For example, bears hibernate during the cold season when food is hard to find. They lower their body temperature, slow down their heartbeat, and eat very little food. This helps them survive these difficult conditions.
8. Why do amphibians hibernate? (Amphibian Hibernation, p. 26-27)
   1. Amphibians also hibernate to survive harsh conditions. Because they are cold-blooded, they must make sure their skin is moist because they will die if it dries out. Hibernating helps them make sure their skin stays moist so they can survive.
9. How does the climate affect the way amphibians hibernate? (Amphibian Hibernation, p. 26-27)
   1. Amphibians live in both warm and cool climates. Both need to hibernate, but in different ways. In warm climates, amphibians hibernate by storing as much water as they can before burrowing underground until the dry season is over. Amphibians in cool climates actually freeze solid to wait out the winter weather before thawing as temperatures rise.
10. Which fun fact stood out to you? Why? (Can You Believe It?, p. 34-35)
    1. Student answers will vary.