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THE JUNGLE BOOK

by Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, in 1865 and his family took him to England when he was 5 years old. His books and poetry made him one of the most popular writers in England, and he became the first English-language writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Rudyard is best known for writing *The Jungle Book* and *Just-So Stories*, as well as poems such as *Gunga Din* and *If* –. *Just-So Stories* is a collection of short stories such as *How the Whale Got His Throat*, *How the Camel Got His Hump*, *How the Leopard Got His Spots*, and *How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin*.



DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

by Jeff Kinney

Jeffrey Patrick Kinney was born in the United States in 1971. As a young reader, Jeff was inspired by such authors as Judy Blume and J.R.R. Tolkien. When he was 27 years old, he started writing down ideas for a book about a middle-school weakling named Gregg Heffley. He called it *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Jeff worked on the book for six years before publishing it online in daily instalments. The book was eventually published in 2007 and became an instant bestseller.



DORK diaries

by Rachel Renée Russell

Rachel Renée Russell is an American author who was born in 1961. She has two younger sisters and younger twin brothers. When she was in 6th grade, she wrote her first book as a birthday present for her brothers. Her first book, *Dork Diaries: Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life*, was published in 2009 and immediately went onto the New York Times Bestsellers list. The main character in the *Dork Diaries* series is Nikki Maxwell, who was named after one of Rachel's own daughters, Nikki. The books are written in a diary format and contain doodles, drawings and comic strips. Rachel's older daughter helps with the writing and her younger daughter helps with the illustrations.



The Peculiar Ostrich

The ostrich is a really strange looking bird. It has a large body, long neck and powerful legs, and even though it has wings, it can't fly. It can run at 70 kilometres an hour and can weigh up to 145 kilograms or more, which makes it the largest and fastest flightless bird in the world. It also lays the largest eggs of any living bird. Besides the ostrich, other flightless birds include the emu, the rhea, the kiwi, the cassowary and the penguin.

Adult male ostriches have black feathers with some white, especially in the tail. The females and young males are usually greyish-brown and white in colour. The head and neck of both male and female ostriches are nearly bare. They usually live in groups of 5 to 50 birds, but it's not uncommon to see one of them wandering about on their own.

Ostriches mainly feed on seeds, shrubs, grass and fruit, but sometimes they also eat insects such as locusts.

They don't have teeth, so they swallow small stones and pebbles to help grind up their food.

An ostrich's head can be as high as 2.8 metres above the ground, which helps it to spot predators, such as lions, from far away. It is not true that ostriches hide their heads in the sand to avoid danger. When it feels threatened, an ostrich will either try to hide by lying flat on the ground, or it will run away. If it's trapped, an ostrich can attack by kicking with its powerful legs. Each leg has two toes, with a large claw on the biggest toe which can cause serious injury when the ostrich kicks. Their legs can only kick forward.

Ostriches are farmed all over the world, particularly for their meat, feathers and skin. The feathers are often made into feather dusters and its skin is used for leather products such as handbags. Ostriches have been farmed in South Africa for many years. At some of these farms, tourists can ride ostriches, buy souvenirs such as egg shells, or watch ostrich races.

Sources: Ducksters.com, Wikipedia



FUN IDIOMS and their meanings!

Idiom: To have ants in your pants.

Meaning: To be restless or excited about something. Not being able to keep still.

Idiom: To be caught red-handed.

Meaning: When someone is caught in the act of doing something wrong, like stealing or cheating.

Idiom: Every cloud has a silver lining.

Meaning: Even when things look bad or hopeless, there is always hope.

Idiom: To have a yellow streak.

Meaning: A person who is a coward.

Idiom: To bite off more than you can chew.

Meaning: To take on more than you can manage.

Idiom: To give the green light.

Meaning: To give permission for something to go ahead or to be done.

Idiom: Birds of a feather flock together.

Meaning: People with the same tastes, likes, beliefs and interests will often be found together.

Idiom: To be a black sheep.

Meaning: Someone in a group or in a family who behaves very differently or badly, or is rather odd and unlike the others.

Idiom: A penny for your thoughts.

Meaning: This is a way to ask someone what they are thinking when they are quiet.

Idiom: To use your grey matter.

Meaning: Grey matter refers to the soft grey tissue of your brain, so using your grey matter means using your brain.

Idiom: The best thing since sliced bread.

Meaning: A very good invention. A good idea or plan.

Idiom: To burn the midnight oil.

Meaning: To work late into the night.

Idiom: Elvis has left the building.

Meaning: When something is finished or is finally over. The event or show has come to an end.

Idiom: To happen once in a blue moon.

Meaning: Something that does not happen very often. A rare event.

Sources: www.learn4good.com, www.learn-english-today.com, www.englishclub.com

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

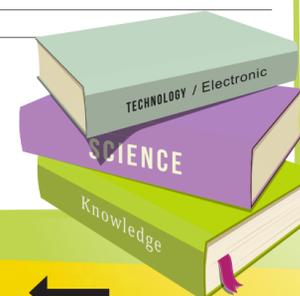
Here are some interesting and fun general knowledge questions for you to try and answer. If you get stumped by any of the questions, then you can find the answers on the right. But a better idea is to go and do some research on the ones you don't know, so that you can improve your general knowledge.

1. What is the largest brass instrument in an orchestra? _____
2. Which country does parmesan cheese originally come from? _____
3. What is the name of the highest mountain in Africa? _____
4. What trees do dates grow on? _____
5. Which colours are used for the five Olympic rings? _____
6. On a standard computer keyboard, what letter is located between E and T? _____
7. Which word in the sentence is an adjective: The friendly dog barked? _____
8. Is hot air lighter or heavier than cold air? _____
9. How many hours are there in seven days? _____
10. Which gas does plants absorb from the atmosphere? _____
11. How many strings does a violin have? _____
12. How many years are there in a century? _____
13. On which continent will you find India? _____
14. How many zeros are there in one hundred thousand? _____
15. Which continent is the Sahara Desert located on? _____
16. Which of the following is not a reptile: turtle, spider, lizard? _____
17. What are the six colours in the South African flag? _____
18. How many months of the year end with the letter H? _____
19. How many millimetres are there in 1 centimetre? _____
20. What is the 19th letter of the alphabet? _____

Source: Knowalot.org

Find the MISSING LETTERS

Z E F G H B J
V C X K
Q P T M L W Y



Some letters of the alphabet are missing. See if you can work out which letters are missing. Then use the missing letters to make a word describing a kind of animal that became extinct a long time ago.

POEMS ABOUT SCHOOL LIFE

GET OUT OF BED
- Diane Z. Shore

Mom (yelling):
Get out of bed, you silly fool!
Get up right now, it's time for school.
If you don't dress without a fuss,
I'll throw you naked on the bus!

Child:
Oh, Mom, don't make me go today.
I'm feeling worse than yesterday.
You don't know what I'm going through.
I've got a strange, rare case of flu.

My body aches, my throat is sore.
I'm sure I'm knocking on death's door.
You can't send me to school – achool –
'Cause everyone could get it, too.

Besides, the kids despise me there.
They always tease and always stare.
And all the teachers know my name.
When something's wrong, it's me they blame.

Mom (yelling):
You faked a headache yesterday.
Don't pull that stuff on me today.
Stop acting like a silly fool –
The principal cannot skip school!

MY TEACHER ATE MY HOMEWORK
- Kenn Nesbitt

My teacher ate my homework,
which I thought was rather odd.
He sniffed at it and smiled
with an approving sort of nod.

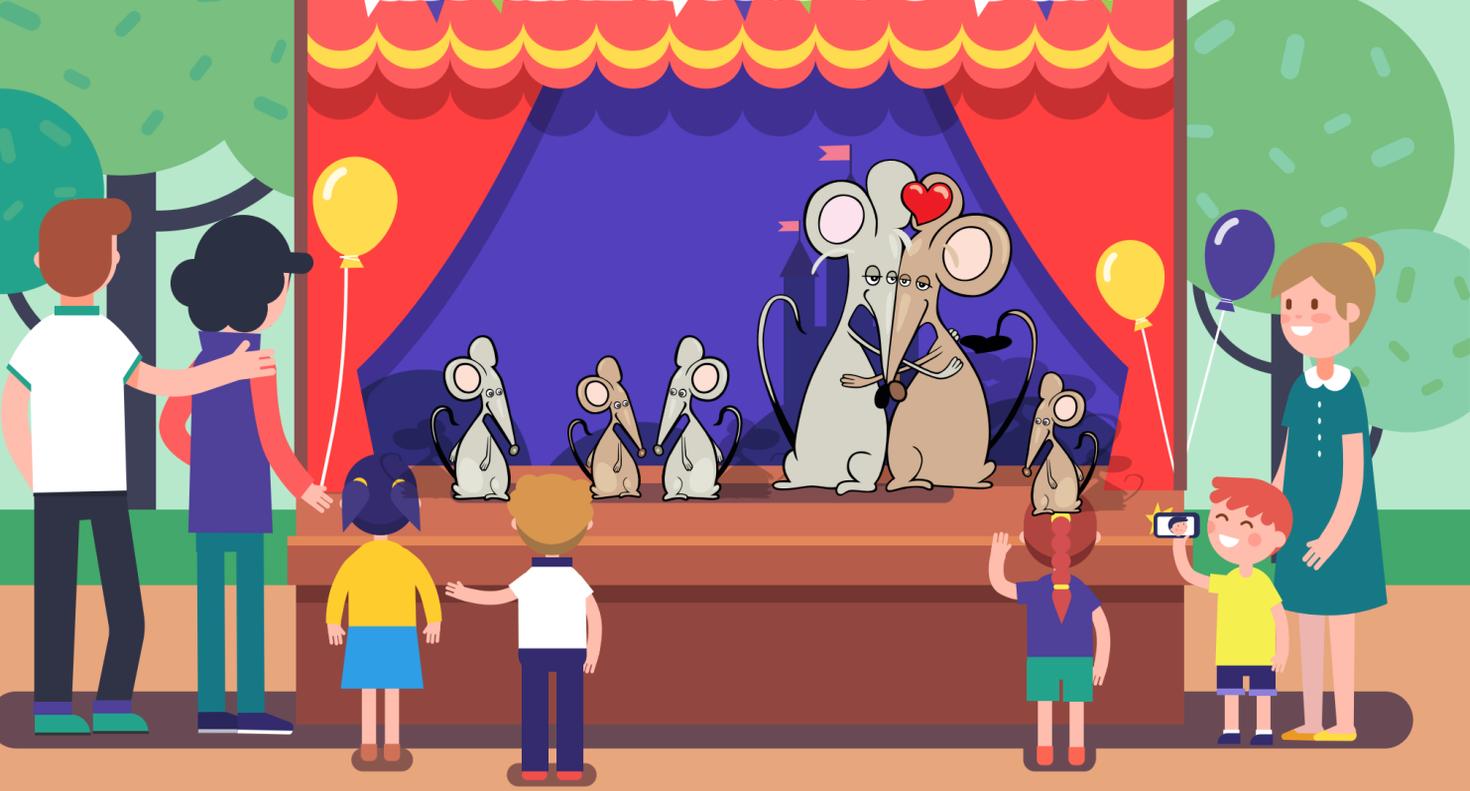
He took a little nibble –
it's unusual, but true –
then had a somewhat larger bite
and gave a thoughtful chew.

I think he must have liked it,
for he really went to town.
He gobbled it with gusto,
and he wolfed the whole thing down.

He licked off all his fingers,
gave a burp, and said, "You pass."
I guess that's how they grade you
when you're in a cooking class.

Answers: 1. The tuba, 2. Italy, 3. Mount Kilimanjaro, 4. Palm trees, 5. Red, blue, black, yellow and green, 6. R, 7. Friendly, 8. Lighter, 9. 168, 10. Carbon dioxide, 11. 4, 12. 100, 13. Asia, 14. 5, 15. Africa, 16. Spider, 17. Green, black, white, gold, red and blue, 18. 1 (Monday), 19. 10, 20. S

Vuyo and Gemma an UNLUCKY break



Vuyo and Gemma have four children – Emma, Petra, Jonah and Michael. They are quadruplets, which means they were all born to their mother at the same time. The quadruplets are in Grade 6 at Mouseville Primary School.

An exciting new Drama teacher, Miss Bosman, joined the school at the beginning of this year. Miss Bosman is very passionate about theatre. She believes it helps children to build their self-confidence and learn to express themselves, so she decided to produce a play in which the Grade 6 learners would participate.

The quadruplets were super-excited and couldn't wait to audition for a part in the play. All four of them auditioned. Miss Bosman chose Jonah for the lead role, while Petra and Emma were given smaller roles. Michael was sad because he didn't get a part in the play, but he was determined not to be miserable. He decided to help his sisters and brother prepare for the play and help them learn their lines. Michael attended all the rehearsals, even though he only watched as the others practised. At home, he helped

Jonah, Petra and Emma go over their lines which they had to memorise. It wasn't long before Michael could repeat almost every line in the play from memory.

After three months of rehearsals, the time came for the Final Dress Rehearsal. This would be the last rehearsal before opening night. Vuyo and Gemma said to Emma, Petra and Jonah: "Break a leg, children!" Now that sounds like a weird thing to say, but it's what you should say to actors to wish them good luck before a performance (you see, actors believe that it's bad luck to say "good luck"). All the performers were excited and nervous.

The final rehearsal started smoothly, but about halfway through, disaster struck! Poor Jonah tripped over a box on the floor and broke his leg. Yes, he literally broke his leg! Miss Bosman quickly called for an ambulance, and Jonah was rushed off to the hospital where his leg was put into a cast so that it could heal properly. What to do now? It was the day before opening night and they had just lost their lead actor. Miss Bosman was in a state

of panic. Would she have to cancel the show after months of hard work? Oh dear, there seemed to be no other choice. Just then, she remembered how Michael had been at all the rehearsals and how he was always helping the others with their lines. Could he possibly take Jonah's part? Maybe, she thought, just maybe.

Michael was worried and sad about Jonah, but when Miss Bosman asked him to take the lead role, he said he would do it. He wanted the show to go on; he wanted to step in because he knew it would make his family happy and proud. But most of all, he wanted to do it for his brother.

All the seats were filled on opening night. The music came up, the audience quietened down, the curtains opened, the lights lit up the stage, and the play began ...

HERE IS A QUESTION FOR YOU, DEAR READER: How would you finish this story?

HOMONYMS AND HOMOPHONES

Homonyms and homophones are both groups of words that share the same pronunciation (they sound the same), but have different meanings. The difference is that homonyms must have the SAME SPELLING, while homophones don't have to have the same spelling – they can have the same spelling OR they can be spelled differently.

Examples of homonyms (note that they all have the same spelling):

- My **arm** is attached to my shoulder. **Arm** yourself for battle.
- The **light** is shining through the window. This box is not heavy, it's very **light**.
- I'm feeling **fine**. There was a **fine** layer of dust on the table.
- What do you **mean**? Freddie is a nasty and **mean** boy.
- **Park** the car in the garage. Let's go and play in the **park**.

The homonyms on the left are also homophones. However, homophones don't have to have the same spelling. Examples of homophones (note that the spelling can be the same or different):

- **Hail** is a form of precipitation. **Hail** to the king!
- A rose is a **flower**. You need **flour** to bake a cake.
- There are **two** birds in the bush. There is **too** much salt in the soup.
- **Change** your clothes when you get home from school. Check your **change** before you leave the shop.
- The teacher **knows** who did it. I wouldn't be able to smell without my **nose**.

WHAT IS A DESERT?

If you think a desert is a hot and dry place, then you are only half right. It's dry, but it doesn't have to be hot. A desert is a barren area of land that receives very little precipitation, such as rain or snow. A desert can be hot or cold, as long as there is very little water because of the lack of precipitation. It's a dry place where it's not easy for plants and animals to flourish. The word desert comes from the Latin word *desertum*, which means "an abandoned place".

Deserts can be hot and sandy or rocky, such as the Sahara Desert or the Kalahari Desert. They can also be cold or even covered in ice, such as in the Arctic and Antarctic – these are called cold deserts or polar deserts. Hot deserts usually have high temperatures in the daytime and cold temperatures at night. Deserts play an important part in controlling the Earth's temperature, because they reflect more of the incoming light than the forests or the sea.

The largest hot desert in the world is the Sahara, which is 9 million square kilometres. The hottest place on Earth is Death Valley, which is in the Mojave Desert in California. The highest temperature on Earth was recorded there: 56.7 degrees Celsius. The largest polar desert is Antarctica, at 13 million square

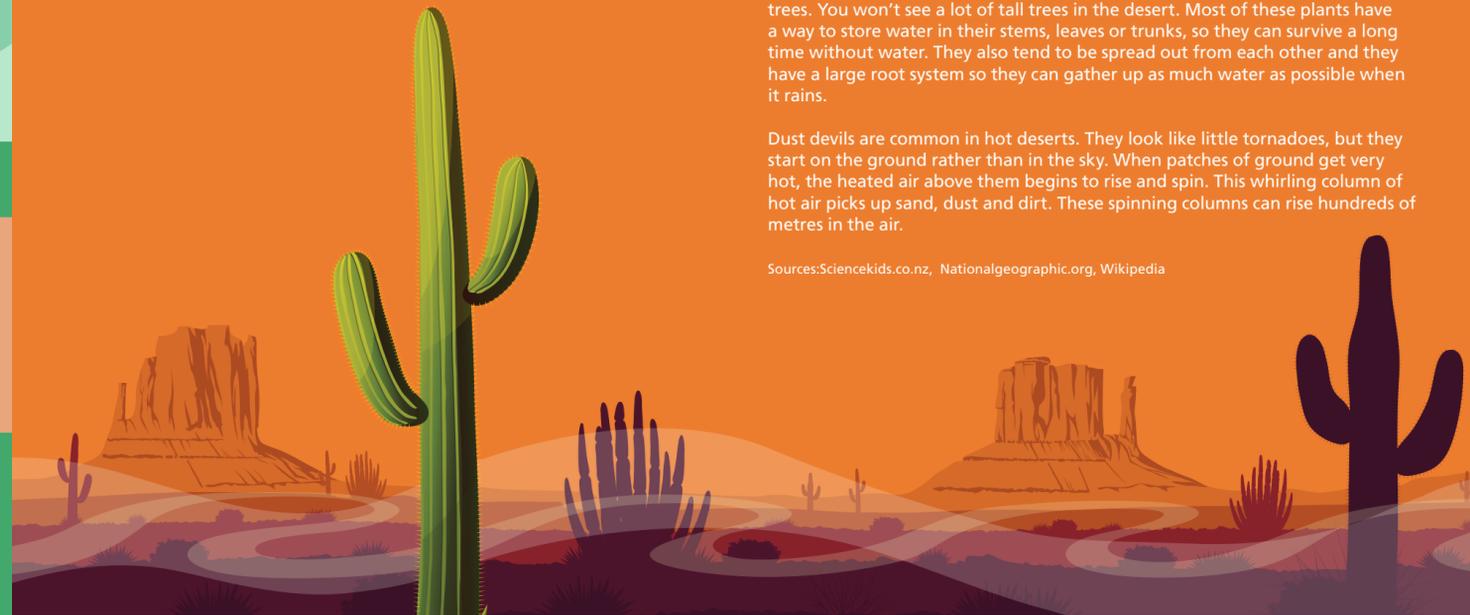
kilometres. Antarctica boasts the lowest natural temperature recorded on Earth: -89.2 degrees Celsius.

Deserts are formed by weathering processes. Large differences in temperature between day and night can put strain on the rocks, which eventually break into pieces. Although rain seldom occurs in deserts, there are sometimes downpours that can result in flash floods. Rain falling on hot rocks can cause them to shatter and the fragments are further eroded by the wind. Temporary lakes may form and salt pans may be left when the water evaporates. An oasis is a place in a desert where there is underground water which reaches the surface. Vegetation will grow around an oasis, and it provides a source of water and shelter for animals and humans.

There are many different kinds of animals that live in the desert. Most of these animals are nocturnal, which means they sleep during the day when the temperature is the hottest, and they hunt at night when the desert cools down. Only certain types of plants can survive the harsh environment of the desert. These include cacti (which is plural for cactus), grasses, shrubs and some short trees. You won't see a lot of tall trees in the desert. Most of these plants have a way to store water in their stems, leaves or trunks, so they can survive a long time without water. They also tend to be spread out from each other and they have a large root system so they can gather up as much water as possible when it rains.

Dust devils are common in hot deserts. They look like little tornadoes, but they start on the ground rather than in the sky. When patches of ground get very hot, the heated air above them begins to rise and spin. This whirling column of hot air picks up sand, dust and dirt. These spinning columns can rise hundreds of metres in the air.

Sources: Sciencekids.co.nz, Nationalgeographic.org, Wikipedia



WHAT IS THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT?

Scientists have warned that the world's climate has changed and has affected many living and non-living things. Some people do not believe that climate change is caused by human activities, while others do.

WHAT IS CLIMATE?

Climate is the average weather conditions of a whole region over a period of time. It tells us what the weather is usually like in the place where you live. For example, some countries like Cameroon, Ghana and Liberia are all in the tropical wet region of Africa. They have a very sunny, hot and wet climate throughout the year. Climate is the general pattern of weather conditions over time.

WHAT IS WEATHER?

Weather describes what is happening outdoors at any particular time, and it can change a lot in a very short time. For example, it can be windy at night, rainy in the morning, hot and sunny at midday, and even back to windy before sunset. It includes daily changes in rainfall, temperature and wind in a region. Weather is local and temporary.

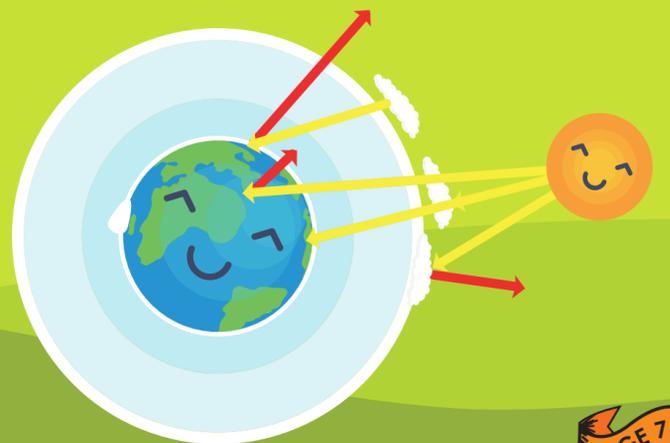
What is the greenhouse effect?

Land, oceans and plants absorb energy from sunlight. Certain gases in the air absorb and trap the heat in the atmosphere, and these gases are called greenhouse gases. Without greenhouse gases, this heat would escape back into space and Earth would be too cold for life to exist. The most common greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide and methane.

What is climate change?

Climate change refers to general changes in climate patterns, including temperature, precipitation, wind and other factors. Scientists believe that human activities are increasing the greenhouse effect. When people drive a car or operate a factory, they burn coal, oil and other fossil fuels. This adds extra greenhouse gases to the air, and the extra gases trap more heat. Many scientists believe that this has led to a steady rise in the average temperature of Earth's surface, which they call global warming.

Sources: Climatekids.nasa.gov, Ducksters.com



PROFESSOR THANDI'S

FUN SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

How to make a paper clip float!

A paper clip is heavier than water, right? If you place it in a bowl of water it will sink to the bottom, right? Well, not so fast. If you're lucky, this experiment will show you how to make a paper clip float on water!

YOU WILL NEED

- Two clean, dry paper clips
- Tissue paper
- A bowl of water
- A pencil with an eraser on one end

INSTRUCTIONS – VERSION 1

1. Fill the bowl with water.
2. Drop the paper clip into the water. Does it float? Probably not, so take it out again.
3. Now tear a piece of tissue paper about half the size of a R10 note.
4. Gently drop the tissue flat onto the surface of the water.
5. Gently place a dry paper clip flat onto the tissue (try not to touch the water or the tissue).
6. Now use the eraser end of the pencil to carefully poke the tissue (not the paper clip) until the tissue sinks. With some luck, the tissue will sink and leave the paper clip floating!

INSTRUCTIONS – VERSION 2

1. Fill the bowl with water.
2. You will need two paper clips.
3.  Open one paper clip so that it forms an L-shape (you only need to unbend it once).
4.  Hold one end of the L-shape between your fingers so that the bottom part of the L is horizontal, forming a little platform.
5.  Place the other paper clip flat on the platform in a horizontal position.
6. Now dip the platform down into the water. If you're lucky, the paper clip on the platform will float on the water.

RESULTS

The paper clip floats on the water because of something called "surface tension". Water molecules on the surface of the water hold on tightly to each other, and this forms a sort of "skin" on the surface. There are no water molecules above, so they cling especially tightly to the molecules at the surface. If the conditions are right, the molecules can hold on so tightly that it's enough to support the paper clip. The paper clip is not truly floating, it is being held up by the surface tension. Many insects, such as water striders, use this "skin" to walk across the surface of water.

Source: kidsactivitiesblog.com/sciencebob.com



The structure of plants

All plants and animals have different parts that we call structures. We can identify the following five structures in most plants: roots, stems, leaves, flowers and seeds. Let's take a look at the different plant structures.

ROOTS

Plant roots are normally found underground. Roots perform the following functions:

- they anchor the plant in the ground,
- they absorb water and nutrients from the soil, and transport them to the rest of the plant, and
- they are used to store food by some plants, like potatoes or carrots.

STEMS

Stems connect the roots to the rest of the plant. Stems perform the following functions:

- they support the leaves, flowers and fruit,
- they carry nutrients and water from the roots to the other parts of the plant, and
- they are used to store food by some plants, such as sugar cane and asparagus.

LEAVES

Leaves can come in many colours, although the leaves of many plants are green. Some leaves change colour during autumn, while others stay green all year round. Leaves come in various shapes and sizes, and have very important functions:

- they absorb sunlight and use it to make food for the plant,

- most leaves have veins (which are like tiny pipes) that carry water and nutrients from the roots and transport food to the rest of the plant, and
- they are used to store water by some plants (such as cactus), or food (such as spinach and lettuce).

FLOWERS

Many plants have flowers, which are very important to the plant:

- they make pollen which is needed to make seeds,
- they are often brightly coloured to attract birds and insects to help spread the pollen and to bring pollen from other flowers,
- they make fruit and seeds, and
- they come in many different shapes and sizes.

SEEDS

Seeds are very important to plants because new plants can grow from seeds. Many plants make seeds and store their seeds in different ways:

- in their fruit, like peaches and oranges,
- in pods, like beans and peas,
- on a cob (like a mealie) or on an ear (like wheat), or
- from the plant's flower, like a dandelion, or like the acorns on an oak tree.

