

# Mr. Whiskers's Whiskers

by ReadWorks



"Stop poking the cat," Consuela's mother told her. Every time Consuela poked the cat, Mr. Whiskers, the cat would bat at her with its paw. It was great fun. "You are going to get scratched."

Consuela stopped poking. Mr. Whiskers stopped batting. They looked at each other. Mr. Whiskers was mostly black, but had white fur on his belly and paws. He was named Mr. Whiskers because his whiskers were long. Consuela reached out and touched one of them. Mr. Whiskers blinked. She touched another one. Mr. Whiskers blinked again. Then he yawned.

"Why does Mr. Whiskers blink when I touch his whisker?" Consuela asked her mother.

"Cats have very sensitive whiskers. They help them feel what's around them."

"Why does Mr. Whiskers bat at me when I poke him?"

"He's practicing hunting. Cats use their paws to catch birds and mice and fish to eat. Sometimes they get excited and forget it's only practice. That's when they can scratch you. Cats are very good at hunting."

"I've never seen Mr. Whiskers hunt anything. If I don't play with him, all he does is sleep."

Mr. Whiskers was now stretched out on the rug asleep. Consuela thought Mr. Whiskers was too lazy to hunt anything. Every time she played with him, he usually got tired and went to sleep pretty quickly. He was an old cat.

"That's because Mr. Whiskers has an easier way of getting food."

Consuela's mother got up and went into the kitchen. She opened the bag of cat food and poured it into his dish.

Mr. Whiskers heard the rustle. He woke right up. His ears perked up and pointed forward. Then he ran into the kitchen. Mr. Whiskers's favorite thing to do was eat. He liked it even more than sleeping.

"How can Mr. Whiskers always tell when it's dinner?" Consuela asked.

"The same way you can tell it's dinner. He uses his ears and his nose. You smell food just like Mr. Whiskers smells food. You hear me call 'dinner' the same way Mr. Whiskers hears me pour cat food into his bowl. All animals have to eat if they want to stay alive. Just like you. So it's pretty important they figure out how to get food one way or another. It's so important that even though there's nothing for Mr. Whiskers to hunt, he still practices."

# An Adventure in Africa

by ReadWorks



It was late at night, but Kevin lay awake in bed. He could not sleep because he was very scared. His bed was inside a giant camping tent, and just outside the tent were the fields of Africa, filled with wild animals. Kevin looked at his parents, who slept soundly in another bed across from him. He wondered how they could be so calm. What if a lion came into their tent to attack them? It took a long time before Kevin finally fell asleep.

When the sun came up, he felt his mother's hand on his head. "Good morning, Kevin!" she said. She looked happy and excited. "Time to wake up and go on the safari."

"I'm scared," said Kevin. Before they left America on the airplane, his parents had explained to him that a safari was a long drive through nature, usually in Africa. During a safari you can see lions and zebras living free,

instead of cooped up in a zoo. "What if we get close to a lion?" he asked.

"Oh, darling," she said. "Like I told you, nothing will happen to us if we listen to what our guide says."

Kevin rubbed his eyes and slowly put on his clothes. He listened to the birds singing outside and began to feel less afraid. He walked out of the tent into bright sunlight, and ate his eggs quickly at the table outside. Then he got into a big green jeep with his mother and father. The driver was a kind-looking man with a bushy gray beard. His name was Jim, and he was their guide.

The jeep took off along a dirt road. After a little while Kevin saw something move out of the corner of his eye. "Wait!" he said. "I see something!"

Jim stopped the car and told them all to get out. Kevin and his parents waited in the tall grass while Jim walked ahead of them and looked around. After a minute Jim raised his hands in the air. "Shhh," he whispered. "It's nothing dangerous. If we speak loudly, we'll scare it away!" Kevin and his parents walked up to where Jim stood, and soon Kevin saw an animal come very close to them. It was a beautiful golden creature with dark brown spots and a very, very long neck. It had come to eat the leaves of a tall tree. "The giraffe is the only animal around here tall enough to reach these leaves," whispered Jim. "That's why it always has food to eat."

"Wow," whispered Kevin. He could not believe how close he was to the giraffe. All his fears vanished, and he began to get excited about the day to come.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the article "Mr. Whiskers's Whiskers" to answer questions 1 to 2.**

1. What kind of animal is Mr. Whiskers?
2. Touching Mr. Whiskers's whiskers is a cause. What effect does it have?

**Use the article "An Adventure in Africa" to answer questions 3 to 4.**

3. What animal does Kevin come close to?
4. What effect does being close to this animal have on Kevin?

**Use the articles "An Adventure in Africa" and "Mr. Whiskers's Whiskers" to answer questions 5 to 6.**

5. Each of these stories has at least one example of cause and effect. Provide an example of cause and effect in "Mr. Whiskers's Whiskers" and in "An Adventure in Africa," and explain how the examples differ.
6. Can an effect happen before a cause? Support your answer with information from both stories.