



Making Tracks

Year 5
2004

The Flea

I am a flea. To be precise, I'm a cat flea, although at the moment I'm living on a dog. This isn't a problem as far as I'm concerned. We fleas live on any animal that has a permanent nest or bed, so dogs, cats, rabbits, mice, squirrels and even humans are all good **hosts** for us.

I've been living on my dog for several days now, ever since it went to sleep on the thick rug where I hatched out of my cocoon.

As soon as I sensed a **warm body** nearby I headed straight for it. I was lucky. I landed on a thick, furry coat with my first jump.

I was really hungry. So I slipped down to the skin, bit hard, and took a long drink of blood. My first warm meal made me feel better, although it didn't stop me from wanting to bite my host again. I nip him several times a minute when I'm hungry.





Taki and the Rain Forest School

Taki didn't want to go to school. School was a scary place and he liked being at home with his mother.

"Off you go, Taki," said his mother. "Your teachers are calling you. **You'll like it at the rain forest school.**"

So Taki set off. Soon the school was all around him. But where was his teacher?

Just then, Taki heard a sound. "Clack, clack, clack, clack!" He saw a long red-and-black beak. It was Toucan.

"Why is your beak so long?" asked Taki.

"Clack, clack, clack, clack," clicked Toucan's beak.

"So I can pick berries from the branches of the trees," he answered.

"I'll use this stick. I'll pick berries, too," thought Taki, and he picked some ripe, red berries.

"Toucan is a good teacher," thought Taki. "I like the rain forest school, but where is my next teacher?"



Key dates in Antarctic history

- 1820** Fabien Bellingshausen, an Estonian, makes first sighting of Antarctic continent (probably).
- 1841** English explorer James Clark Ross penetrates pack ice to 78° south.
- 1898** Belgian expedition becomes the first to winter in the pack ice.
- 1899** Carsten Borchgrevinck's British expedition winters on the continent.
- 1901–04** Scott's Discovery expedition. Men sledge to 82° south.
- 1907–09** Shackleton's Nimrod expedition. A party sledges to within 97 nautical miles (180 km) of the Pole.
- 1910–12** Roald Amundsen's expedition in the *Fram*. A team reaches the South Pole on 15 December 1911.
- 1910–13** Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition. Five men reach the South Pole five weeks after Amundsen, and all die on return journey.
- 1911–14** Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition to Adélie Land.
- 1914–17** Shackleton's transantarctic expedition and his epic journey to South Georgia after the ship *Endurance* is wrecked.
- 1922** Shackleton dies at South Georgia during his third expedition.
- 1934–37** British Graham Land Expedition discovers that the Antarctic Peninsula is not an archipelago (group of islands).
- 1935** Caroline Mikkelson becomes the first woman to set foot on the continent.
- 1947** American Richard Byrd makes a flight over the South Pole.
- 1955–58** Continent crossed for the first time by explorers Vivien Fuchs and Edmund Hillary's Commonwealth Transantarctic Expedition.
- 1956** American George Dufek's plane lands at the Pole – the first man there since Scott.
- 1957–58** International Geophysical Year. Twelve countries establish 60 bases on Antarctica and surrounding islands.
- 1959** Antarctic Treaty, which applies to all territory south of latitude 60° south, signed by 12 nations.
- 1961** Antarctic Treaty comes into force.
- 1991** International agreement on Environmental Protection places a 50-year ban on digging for oil and minerals.



Left with the Baby

Tamara pressed the doorbell and it played a ridiculous tune. She heard the rumble of voices inside the house and the wail of a baby. Great. A grizzler. Just what she needed. Sometimes she wondered if babysitting was worth the money. And this kid was only a year old, much younger than usual.

The Marriots wore the befuddled expressions of people who are always disorganised or late. Mrs Marriot was stick-thin and wore a clinging green dress. She looked like a celery stick with make-up. Mr Marriot was plump and pale, and constantly slid his hands into his jacket pockets then took them out again. ‘We’ve heard good things about you from the Seatons, Tamara,’ he said. ‘We’ve had such trouble with our babysitters.’

The Seaton’s four-year-old twins had been so easy to look after; perfectly behaved. Tamara wanted to ask about the Marriot’s other sitters but she didn’t dare.

She took a good look at the child: a pretty blonde with blue eyes and pink cheeks. There was the hint of tears from the recent disturbance, and a smear across one cheek. The baby seemed fascinated by the arrival of a new face and stared back, unblinking, at Tamara.

‘Her name’s Zoe,’ Mr Marriot said.

His wife scribbled on a piece of paper and sat it next to the phone. ‘We’ll be at the Assam Restaurant in Hutt Street. Here’s the number. Call us if there’s any trouble.’ Her expression was earnest and the way she said ‘trouble’ made it seem that she expected it.

After a flurry of what-have-we-left-behind fussing and last-minute instructions, the Marriots departed. Tamara was left with the baby.

Creatures of the Tarkine Rainforest

Eastern Pygmy-possum

Appearance: The size of a large mouse, this nocturnal possum is best distinguished from its smaller cousin, the Little Pygmy-possum, by colour: it is fawn-grey to olive-brown above and has white-tipped fur on its underside. The tail is strongly prehensile, providing a powerful grip as it climbs in search of food.

Habitat: South-eastern Australia, including Tasmania's Tarkine rainforest.

Diet: Mainly nectar and pollen, which it gathers with a long, brush-tipped tongue (this may help pollinate some species of Banksia). Insects and soft fruit are also eaten, especially when blossoms are scarce. Meals are followed by elaborate grooming. When food is plentiful, body fat is stored in the base of the tail, which becomes swollen.

Torpor: A special adaptation helps cope with the Tasmanian winter. This animal can reduce energy expenditure by lowering its metabolism almost to the surrounding temperature – a condition called torpor. For a few days at a time it will barely move.

Nest: A small tree hollow, filled with shredded bark.

Breeding habits: In Tasmania, breeding takes place from late winter to spring. Usually four young are suckled in the pouch for up to six weeks after birth, with females having two litters per season.



RAIN



A Kid Complains

Rain, rain, spits and shouts.
Rain, rain, floods me out.
Ruins my hat, freezes my feet,
roller-coasters me down the street.
Rain, rain, you're gloomy and grey.
Rain, rain, you've washed out my day.

Rain Replies

At first, I drift, a sleepy mist,
then tap on your head with my fingertips.
Next, I fall to a big band's beat
and rinse the sooty sky like a sheet.
I lick the wings of birds so clean
they soar above the clouds to sing.
I slice through thunder, make the wind shake,
raise the rivers, fill up the lakes.
On a day like this, when the wild rain rides,
isn't it fun to stay inside,
AND LISTEN!

Jeri Kroll

Year 5 – Writing

This task will take 40 minutes.

“What an amazing machine!”

Your story can be about your amazing machine and the incredible things it can do.

or

Your story can be about someone else and their adventures with an amazing machine.

When writing, you may like to think about:

What kind of machine is it?

Who invented it?

Was the machine found somewhere?

What does it do?

Does the machine work the way it is supposed to?

Why is the machine so amazing?

