



## Sloths

By C4A Academy



<https://a-z-animals.com/media/2021/07/sloth.jpg>

SLOTHS are slow-moving mammals that live in trees and are native to Central and South America. They move slowly to CONSERVE energy, spending most of their time sleeping or resting in trees. Considering how they spend most of their time it is appropriate that a group of sloths is called a “bed.” Sloths have a long LIFESPAN, with some species living up to 20 years in the wild. Sloths are good swimmers and can hold their breath for up to 40 minutes underwater.

Spell: LIFESPAN      CONSERVE      SLOTHS

A group of sloths is called a \_\_\_\_\_. BED

Sloths move slowly to conserve \_\_\_\_\_. ENERGY

Sloths can hold their breath for up to how long underwater? 40 MINUTES

Sloths can live up to how long in the wild? 20 YEARS

Sloths are native to where? CENTRAL AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA

Sloths have a small head and a round body, and their eyes are set deep in their SOCKETS, giving them a sleepy APPEARANCE. They have long, shaggy fur that ranges in color from brown to gray. Their fur provides INSULATION, keeping them warm. They have long arms and legs. Sloths have three toes on their hind legs and two toes on their front legs, each with a long, sharp claw. Their claws help them cling to tree branches. When sloths do move, they use their sharp claws to cling to branches and pull themselves along moving slowly, conserving energy.

Spell: CLAWS                      INSULATION                      APPEARANCE

Their eyes are set deep in their \_\_\_\_\_. SOCKETS

Sloths use their sharp claws to cling to tree \_\_\_\_\_. BRANCHES

Each of a sloth's toes has a \_\_\_\_\_ claw. LONG, SHARP

Tell me something about the sloth's fur. LONG, SHAGGY, BROWN, GRAY, INSULATION, KEEPS THEM WARM

Sloths live in rainforests, and they are excellent tree climbers. They spend most of their time in the trees, where they feed on leaves, shoots, and buds. When they are on the ground, they are VULNERABLE to PREDATORS, such as JAGUARS and HARPY eagles, so they move quickly to get back into the safety of the trees.

Spell: HARPY                      VULNERABLE                      PREDATORS

Sloths live in \_\_\_\_\_. RAINFORESTS

Sloths are vulnerable to harpy eagles and \_\_\_\_\_. JAGUARS

Sloths feed on what? LEAVES, SHOOTS, BUDS

Sloths have one of the lowest body TEMPERATURES of any mammal, ranging from 68°F (20° C) to 82°F (27° C). They have low body temperature because of their slow METABOLISM and low MUSCLE mass. A slow metabolism means that their bodies burn energy more slowly, and therefore generate less heat. Sloths' relatively small amount of muscle mass also CONTRIBUTES to their low body temperature. This low body temperature helps sloths conserve energy, as it requires less energy to maintain a low body temperature than a high one. Additionally, living in the warm and humid rainforests where they are found, a low body temperature helps sloths REGULATE their body temperature and avoid overheating.

Spell: CONTRIBUTES                      MUSCLE                      HUMID  
Sloths have one of the lowest body \_\_\_ of any mammal. TEMPERATURE  
Their temperature ranges from what to what? 68 – 82 F, 20 – 27 C  
Sloths have a slow \_\_\_ and low muscle mass. METABOLISM  
An advantage of having a low body temperature is that it helps the sloth  
\_\_\_. REGULATE THEIR BODY TEMPERATURE, AVOID OVERHEATING

Sloth babies are born fully FURRED and with their eyes open, and they cling to their mother's belly for the first few months of life. During this time, the mother feeds and cares for her young, teaching them how to climb and find food. When the young are old enough, they VENTURE out on their own and establish their own TERRITORIES.

Spell:                      VENTURE                      TERRITORIES  
The babies are born fully \_\_\_\_. FURRED  
Baby sloths cling to their mother's what? BELLY  
The mother teaches her young how to \_\_\_\_. CLIMB, FIND FOOD

Sloths COMMUNICATE with each other using high-PITCHED sounds and body language. Sloths are SOLITARY animals and spend most of their time alone. They are NOCTURNAL, meaning they are most active at night. Sloths move so slowly that ALGAE can grow on their fur, providing them with a green, leafy appearance. This helps them blend in with their surroundings and protects them from predators.

Spell: SOLITARY                      PITCHED                      NOCTURNAL  
Sloths use sounds and body language to \_\_\_ with each other.  
COMMUNICATE  
What can grow on their fur? ALGAE  
The algae on their fur gives them a \_\_\_ appearance. GREEN, LEAFY

Sloths have a SYMBIOTIC (mutually beneficial) relationship with Bradley's moth and HOFFMAN'S two-toed sloth moth. These moths live in the fur of the sloth and feed on algae that grow in the fur. The sloths, in turn, benefit from the moths' presence as the moths help to clean the sloth's fur by eating the algae. This MUTUALISTIC relationship is an example of how different species can interact and benefit from each other in the natural world.

Spell: SYMBIOTIC MUTUALISTIC  
Sloths benefit from their symbiotic relationship with the \_\_\_ two-toed sloth moth. HOFFMAN'S  
The moths provide additional \_\_\_. NUTRIENTS  
How do the moths benefit from the sloths? LIVE ON THEM, EAT/FEED ON ALGAE

Sloths play an important role in their ECOSYSTEM by spreading seeds and POLLINATING plants. As they feed on leaves and buds, they drop the UNDIGESTED seeds onto the forest floor, helping to REGENERATE the forest. They also act as hosts for various insects, such as moths and beetles, which help to pollinate plants and play a role in the food chain. Sloths also help to control the growth of certain plants by eating the leaves, buds, and shoots. This helps to maintain a balance in the ecosystem and ensures that there is enough food for other animals.

Spell: ECOSYSTEM REGENERATE POLLINATING  
Sloths spread seeds and pollinate \_\_\_. PLANTS  
Sloths regenerate the forest when they drop what kinds of seeds?  
UNDIGESTED  
Sloths act as hosts for \_\_\_. INSECTS, BEETLES, MOTHS

Sloths face many threats in their natural habitat, including habitat DESTRUCTION, hunting, and climate change. DEFORESTATION and other forms of habitat destruction are reducing the amount of forest available to sloths, forcing them into smaller and smaller areas. Hunting is also a threat to sloths, as they are hunted for their fur, which is used to make clothing and ACCESSORIES. Climate change also threatens them, as it is causing changes in the sloths' habitat, including changes in the amount of rain and the DISTRIBUTION of food sources.

Spell: DESTRUCTION DEFORESTATION THREAT  
Sloths face the threats of habitat destruction, climate change, and \_\_\_.  
HUNTING  
Climate change is changing the amount of rain received and \_\_\_ of food sources. DISTRIBUTION  
Sloth fur is used to make what? CLOTHING, ACCESSORIES

In recent years, CONSERVATION efforts have been underway to protect sloths. These efforts include habitat preservation, anti-hunting laws, and education programs. Sloths are unique and intriguing creatures that play an important role in their ecosystem. With their slow movements, shaggy fur, and sharp claws, they are perfectly ADAPTED to life in the trees of the rainforest. By understanding the importance of sloths and supporting conservation efforts, we can help to protect these slow-moving creatures and ensure their SURVIVAL.

Spell:                      SURVIVAL                                      PROTECT  
What kinds of efforts are underway to protect sloths? CONSERVATION  
Sloths are perfectly \_\_\_ to life in the rainforest. ADAPTED  
A conservation effort underway to protect sloths is \_\_\_\_\_. HABITAT  
PRESERVATION, ANTI-HUNTING LAWS, EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
What do you think about sloths?

*This lesson was written with the assistance of ChatGPT.*