

LEVELED BOOK • K

# Nature Stinks!

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level  
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Written by Kira Freed

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## Focus Question

How does being stinky help plants and animals?

# Words to Know

disturb

rotten

enemies

spray

liquid

stinky

Front cover: The corpse flower's first bloom doesn't happen for at least seven years. The flower only stays open for a day or two.

Title page: Stinkbugs spray a smelly liquid to stay safe from lizards, birds, and insects.

Page 3: The Tasmanian devil smells fine when it's calm. When it is in danger, a bad smell comes from near its tail.

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## Correlation

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# Stinky Nature

If you've ever smelled a skunk,  
you know it is not a nice odor.  
In fact, it's terrible!

Did you know that both plants  
and animals can smell bad? **Stinky**  
plants smell bad to get helpful  
insects to come near. Stinky animals  
often smell bad to keep **enemies**  
away. Smelling bad helps both  
plants and animals stay alive.



Skunks are famous for smelling bad, but some animals smell even worse!



A striped polecat may spray, bark, and fluff up its tail to scare enemies.

## Stinky Furry Animals

Skunks are well-known smelly animals. When enemies get close, skunks lift their tail and **spray** a **stinky liquid**.

Striped polecats are cousins of skunks. They stink even worse!



A lesser anteater's rough fur keeps ants off its body.

Lesser anteaters are at least four times as stinky as a skunk! They shoot a smelly liquid at their enemies.

Opossums pretend to be dead if an enemy is near. They stay still and let out stinky green slime.



Opossums are cousins of kangaroos and other animals with pouches.



Wolverines are also called "skunk bears" or "nasty cats."

Wolverines make a smelly liquid to keep other animals away from their home. They also pee on food they don't eat right away. The smell may help them find the food later. It may also keep other animals from eating it.



Musk oxen have two layers of hair to stay warm.

Male musk oxen fight each other for females. Males use their stinky pee to tell other males to keep away. The pee sticks to their long belly hair and makes them smell terrible.

# Stinky Plants

The corpse flower smells rotten. It makes heat and steam so insects far away will smell it. The plant's bad smell brings flies and beetles near. These insects are looking for rotten meat to eat. Instead of rotten meat, the bugs collect powder from the flower and carry it to other corpse flowers. The powder helps more corpse flowers grow.



A different stinky plant smells like poop! This plant's bad smell brings beetles that love poop. The smell comes from inside the plant's flowers.



The stinkbird, or hoatzin (wat-SEEN), has wings but does not fly much.

## Stinky Birds

The stinkbird mainly eats leaves. Food goes to its crop (the area under its throat) before the stomach. Tiny living things there break down the leaves. This way of eating makes the stinkbird smell terrible.

Vultures eat animals that are dead and often **rotten**. When vultures are in danger, they throw up! The stuff they throw up is very smelly.



A vulture's stomach acid helps it eat rotten meat.



This beetle sprays a mix of liquids that shoot out with a pop!

## Stinky Bugs

A type of beetle sprays a hot, stinky liquid from the back of its body. The spray can kill many enemies and burn people.

Millipedes (MILL-ih-peedz) can't move fast. If an enemy bothers them, they curl up and give off a stinky liquid. Some millipedes can even shoot the smelly stuff!



A millipede's spray can make skin burn or itch.

# Other Stinky Animals

The common musk turtle has another name—stinkpot! It smells bad when other animals **disturb** it. A stinky yellow liquid comes out of the back of its body.



A musk turtle can live forty to sixty years.



A female mink frog can lay 500 to 4,000 eggs at once.

The mink frog also uses smell to stay safe from enemies. It smells like rotten onions.

## Protecting the Nest

The green woodhoopoe lives in Africa. The female makes a bad smell to protect her nest. She sprays a dark, stinky liquid to keep enemies from getting too close.



## Good and Stinky

Being stinky helps many plants and animals stay alive. For plants, the bad smell brings helpful insects. For animals, the bad smell may keep enemies away or help in other ways. Stinky steam, spray, throw-up, slime, and pee all help living things stay alive.

## Glossary

**disturb** (*v.*) to bother or interrupt  
(p. 14)

**enemies** (*n.*) living things that hate  
or hurt other living  
things (p. 4)

**liquid** (*n.*) something that is  
capable of flowing and  
changing shape while  
keeping its size (p. 5)

**rotten** (*adj.*) very bad or unpleasant  
(p. 11)

**spray** (*v.*) to scatter many drops  
of a liquid in a certain  
direction (p. 5)

**stinky** (*adj.*) having a strong or bad  
smell (p. 4)

# Nature Stinks!

A Reading A-Z Level K Leveled Book

Word Count: 398



## Connections

### Writing and Art

Which animal from this book do you find most interesting? Why? Draw a picture and write several sentences about it.

### Science

Compare and contrast two animals from this book. Make a list of how these animals are alike and how they are different. Share your list with a partner.

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