

Name _____

Animal Adaptations

Date _____

Tusk, Tusk!

To get out of the water, a walrus digs its tusks into the ice. Then it pulls its heavy body up.

What does it take to survive in the bitter cold of the Arctic? In the winter, Arctic temperatures can drop to -32°C ! For a walrus, it takes a lot of blubber to survive. An adult walrus may weigh up to 1,200 kilograms.

The walrus is the only seal that has tusks. Its tusks are actually canine teeth. A walrus's tusks may grow almost a meter long. Using its strong tusks, a walrus can break holes in the ice from underneath. Tusks also come in handy if a walrus needs to protect itself or its territory.



The walrus has flat flippers for feet. The flippers make the walrus a good swimmer. With its sensitive, bristly whiskers, a walrus can find clams on the dark ocean floor. When it isn't eating or searching for food, a walrus often rests on floating sea ice. Because the ice floats, a walrus can find food in many places away from the shore.

As temperatures rise, there is less sea ice for walruses to rest on. Scientists wonder what will happen if more walruses begin resting on land. Will there be enough food for the walruses? Will walruses be safe? Scientists are tracking walruses to see where they go and what they do.

Write "Yes" or "No" to answer each question. Then give a reason for your answer.

1. If a polar bear attacked a walrus, could the walrus defend itself?

2. In the arctic food chain, is a walrus a producer?

3. Is there a reason that a walrus's feet are flat flippers?

4. Is it more important for a walrus to have a lot of blubber than for it to have strong tusks?

5. Is it possible that warmer temperatures will affect walrus survival?
