

Deer and Antelopes

Deer and antelopes are ruminant mammals. The word ruminant refers to animals that have more than one stomach chamber. These animals chew and digest their food twice. The food that has already been digested once is called cud. Deer and antelopes are vegetarians. They eat grass, twigs, seeds, flowers, tree bark and fruit. Deer and antelopes are quick animals with compact legs so they can move easily in areas that are thick with trees and branches. Since they do not have to hunt prey, they are not especially intelligent animals. However, they do have excellent instincts, and they react to predators by quickly running away at very fast speeds. Deer and antelopes can run for long stretches of time, which is useful when they are being chased by a cheetah (one of their main predators). Though cheetahs can run faster than any other land animal, they cannot run for long periods of time, so if a deer or antelope gets a head start, it can often escape a cheetah.

Male deer are called stags, bucks, bulls or hart, depending on the species of deer. All male deer have antlers, which they shed and re-grow each year. Female deer are called cows, does, or hinds. Females do not have antlers or have small stubs. The only exception is the female caribou (reindeer), which does have antlers. Young deer are called fawns or calves.

Antelopes are closely related to deer but have a few differences. The main difference is their antlers. Antelopes do not shed their antlers each year. They have the same set for their entire lives. Both male and female antelopes have antlers. Adult male antelopes are called bucks, and females are called does. Baby antelopes are called calves. Like deer, most antelopes live in grasslands and forests, but some live in mountains and deserts.

Deer and antelopes live in groups called herds. Usually, a female is the center of the herd, and the males will go off by themselves when they are not mating. Deer are found on every continent except Antarctica and Australia. In North America, there are five types of deer. These are the white-tailed deer, caribou (reindeer), elk, moose and mule deer.

Deer and Antelopes Questions

1. Deer and antelopes are
 - a. two names for the same animal.
 - b. ruminant mammals.
 - c. both animals that shed their antlers each year.
 - d. carnivores.

2. Deer and antelope have
 - a. two stomach chambers.
 - b. two separate stomachs.
 - c. one stomach chamber that digests food twice.
 - d. None of these

3. Food that a deer has already digested once is called _____.

4. Deer and antelope are
 - a. quick and intelligent.
 - b. slow but intelligent.
 - c. not very intelligent but very quick.
 - d. skilled hunters.

5. Deer and antelope
 - a. can run faster than cheetahs.
 - b. can run longer distances than cheetahs.
 - c. rarely outrun a cheetah.
 - d. prey on cheetahs.

6. Deer and antelopes live in groups called
 - a. packs.
 - b. families.
 - c. species.
 - d. herds.

Name _____



Date _____

Deer and Antelopes Questions (Cont'd)

7. One of the main differences between antelopes and deer is
 - a. deer shed their antlers and antelopes do not.
 - b. deer have antlers and antelopes do not.
 - c. antelopes shed their antlers and deer do not.
 - d. antelopes have antlers and deer do not.

8. Reindeer are unusual because
 - a. They live in Antarctica.
 - b. They can fly.
 - c. Females have antlers.
 - d. They are not true deer.

9. One name for a male deer is _____.

10. One name for a female deer is _____.

Name _____



Date _____

Deer and Antelopes Answers

1. b
2. a
3. cud
4. c
5. b
6. d
7. a
8. c
9. stag, buck, bull or hart
10. cow, doe, or hind