

Linguistics: Animal Communication

Linguistics · Answer Key · 12 Questions

1. Which of the following animal groups is known for having a complex system of clicks and whistles that they use for communication, including echolocation?

- A) Elephants
- B) Dolphins**
- C) Owls
- D) Snakes

2. The 'waggle dance' is a form of communication used by which insect to inform other members of its colony about the direction and distance to a food source?

- A) Ants
- B) Bees**
- C) Butterflies
- D) Spiders

3. Certain species of birds, like the lyrebird, are famous for their ability to mimic sounds. What is this ability called in linguistics?

- A) Syntax
- B) Phonetics
- C) Vocalization
- D) Mimicry**

4. Primates, such as chimpanzees, use a variety of vocalizations, gestures, and facial expressions. These are considered a form of:

- A) Written language
- B) Non-verbal communication**
- C) Sign language
- D) Telepathy

5. Some marine mammals, like humpback whales, sing complex songs that can travel long distances underwater. These songs are believed to be used for:

- A) Navigation
- B) Finding food
- C) Attracting mates**
- D) Warning of danger

6. The study of signs and symbols and their interpretation, including animal signals, is known as:

- A) Semantics
- B) Etymology
- C) Zoosemiotics**
- D) Pragmatics

7. When an animal makes a distinct sound to warn others of a predator, this is an example of a signal functioning as:

- A) A greeting
- B) A command
- C) An alarm call**
- D) A song

8. Some animals, like prairie dogs, have alarm calls that are specific enough to describe the type of predator. This is an example of:

- A) Limited vocabulary
- B) Displacement
- C) Referential communication**
- D) Arbitrariness

9. The ability for a language to be used to talk about things that are not present in space or time (e.g., the past or future) is called 'displacement'. Which animal communication system is known to possess a limited form of this?

- A) Dog barks
- B) Cat meows
- C) Bee dances**
- D) Bird songs

10. The chemical signals used by insects, such as ants, to communicate information about food, danger, or social status are called:

- A) Ultrasonic waves
- B) Pheromones**
- C) Electrical impulses
- D) Vibrations

11. What is the term for the study of the sounds of speech and how they are produced and perceived, which can be applied to understanding animal vocalizations?

- A) Syntax
- B) Morphology
- C) Phonetics**
- D) Semantics

12. The vervet monkey has distinct alarm calls for different predators (e.g., leopard, eagle, snake). This ability to convey specific information about the environment is a characteristic of:

- A) Random noise
- B) Instinctive reactions
- C) Meaningful signals**
- D) Universal language