

Foxes: Masters of Many Habitats

Instructions: Read the text about foxes and the places they live. Look for the habitat vocabulary in bold. Then answer the questions.

Meet the fox

Foxes are **mammals** in the dog family. The best-known in the UK is the red fox. What makes foxes amazing is how well they can **adapt**: they can live in quiet countryside fields, deep woodland edges, and even busy towns by changing what they eat and where they rest.

A fox's favourite place is often a mixed **habitat**: a patchwork of grass, bushes, and trees. This kind of landscape gives cover for sneaking, open space for hunting, and lots of different foods.

Woodland, farmland, and city streets

In **woodland** and along forest edges, foxes use brambles, fallen logs, and thick undergrowth as cover. On **farmland**, hedgerows and field margins act like fox "motorways," helping them travel without being seen. In **urban** areas, foxes may slip through gardens, parks, and quiet alleys—often most active at dusk and night when streets are calmer.

A fox usually has a safe "home base" called a **den** (sometimes a burrow it digs or one made by another animal). Dens are often tucked into sheltered spots such as thickets, under tree

Where foxes can live



Habitats up close



roots, or among rocks. Foxes also defend a **territory**—an area they know well for food, shelter, and escape routes.

What do foxes eat?

Foxes are **omnivores**, which means they eat both animals and plants. Their main prey is often small mammals (like mice and rabbits), but they also eat birds, insects, and fruit. In towns, foxes may become **opportunistic** and use whatever food is available, including scraps left outside. This flexible diet is one reason they cope so well in different habitats.

Built for hunting and hiding

Foxes have strong **hearing** and can pick up tiny sounds made by animals moving in grass or underground. Their quiet paws and reddish coat help them **camouflage** in autumn leaves and tall plants. When food is scarce, they may spend more time searching and scavenging, showing again how well they can adapt.

Sharing space with humans

Because foxes can live in rural and **urban** habitats, people often spot them in gardens or parks. Green spaces matter: they provide cover, hunting areas, and safe routes between resting places. Protecting hedgerows, woodland edges, and

Food and survival



Adaptations



Protect the green spaces



parkland helps many kinds of wildlife, not just foxes.

If you see a fox, the best choice is to watch quietly from a distance. Leaving food out can change a fox's natural behaviour, so wildlife experts usually recommend keeping bins secure and not encouraging feeding. Foxes do best when they can stay wild—clever, cautious, and free to move through their habitat.

Glossary

Word	Meaning
Habitat	The natural place an animal lives and finds what it needs.
Mammal	A warm-blooded animal with fur or hair that feeds its young with milk.
Adapt	To change behaviour or habits to survive in a new situation or place.
Den	A sheltered place a fox uses as a home base, especially for resting and raising young.
Territory	An area an animal knows well and may defend because it contains food and shelter.
Omnivore	An animal that eats both other animals and plants.
Opportunistic	Willing to use whatever food or shelter is available, even if it changes.
Camouflage	Colouring or patterns that help an animal blend into its surroundings.
Urban	A built-up area such as a town or city.
Green spaces	Areas with plants (like parks, hedgerows, and woodland edges) where wildlife can feed, hide, and travel.

Questions

1. Using information from *two different paragraphs*, explain **how** foxes are able to **adapt** to living in both countryside and towns. Include one example about **food** and one example about **habitat**.

2. The text describes a mixed **habitat** as a "patchwork." Explain why a patchwork of trees, grass, and bushes can help a fox. Give **two** reasons from the passage.

3. Compare **woodland** and **farmland** habitats by stating: (a) one feature of each habitat that helps a fox, and (b) one way they are similar based on the passage.

4. A student says: "Cities are not a habitat for wildlife." Use evidence from the text to **challenge** this statement by explaining how foxes use **urban** areas. Include at least **two** examples.

5. Explain why a fox might need a sheltered **den**. Base your reasoning on what the text says about where dens are found and what a den is used for.

6. Construct a **flow description** of a fox's evening: start with where it might travel (use the farmland or urban paragraph), include how it finds food (use the diet paragraph), and end with where it might return to rest.

7. The text lists foods foxes may eat. Sort them into two groups: **animal food** and **plant food**. Provide at least **two** examples in each group using only items named in the passage.

8. Explain how being an **omnivore** helps a fox survive in different habitats. Connect your answer to what the text says about changing food sources.

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9. The passage mentions foxes have strong **hearing**. Explain how this adaptation could help a fox hunt. Use the phrase "tiny sounds" in your answer.
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10. The text says foxes use **camouflage**. Explain how camouflage helps a fox in two different ways: (1) when hunting and (2) when avoiding danger.
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11. Identify the two ideas working together in the "Sharing space with humans" section: (1) why foxes appear in towns and (2) why **green spaces** matter. For each idea, state one detail from the text.
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12. Write a short explanation that uses the words **territory**, **food**, **shelter**, and **escape routes** to show why a fox needs to know its area well.
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13. The final paragraph gives advice about seeing a fox. Choose **two** suggested actions and explain **why** each one helps foxes stay wild.
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14. Use evidence from the text to argue which habitat feature seems most important for foxes: **cover** (like brambles/undergrowth), **travel routes** (like hedgerows), or **food choice** (being omnivores). Give one piece of evidence for your choice, and one sentence explaining why another feature still matters.
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15. The text explains that leaving food out can change a fox's behaviour. Compare a fox that finds natural prey with a fox that relies on scraps by describing one possible difference in how each one searches for food.
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Answer Key

1. Foxes adapt by changing what they eat (they can hunt small mammals, eat insects and fruit, or use whatever food is available) and by changing where they live/rest (they can use woodland edges, farmland hedgerows, or urban gardens/parks and return to a den).
2. A patchwork habitat helps because it provides cover for sneaking/hiding and open areas for hunting, plus lots of different foods from different places.
3. Woodland: thick undergrowth/brambles and forest edges provide cover. Farmland: hedgerows and field margins help foxes travel and hide. They are similar because both give routes and shelter that help foxes move and hunt.
4. The text says foxes use urban gardens, parks, and quiet alleys, often at dusk or night when it is calmer. That shows cities can be a habitat for some wildlife.
5. A den is a sheltered home base, so placing it in thickets/under roots/among rocks helps keep it hidden and protected while the fox rests or raises young.
6. In the evening a fox might travel along hedgerows/field margins or through gardens and parks. It uses strong senses to search for food like small mammals, insects, or fruit (or available scraps). After feeding, it can return to its den to rest.
7. Animal food: small mammals (mice/rabbits), birds, insects. Plant food: fruit (any two correct examples from the passage).
8. Being an omnivore means a fox can switch between animal prey and plant foods, and in urban areas it can also use whatever is available, so it is less likely to run out of food in different habitats or seasons.
9. Strong hearing helps a fox hunt because it can listen for "tiny sounds" made by animals moving in grass or underground and then locate them.
10. Camouflage helps when hunting because prey is less likely to notice the fox, and it helps avoid danger because the fox can blend into plants and shadows and stay hidden.
11. (1) Foxes appear in towns because they can use urban habitats like gardens and parks. (2) Green spaces matter because they provide cover, hunting areas, and safe routes.

12. A fox needs to know its territory because it contains food and shelter, and knowing the area gives it escape routes when it needs to get away quickly.
13. Example answers: Watch quietly from a distance so the fox is not disturbed. Keep bins secure / don't leave food out so foxes don't depend on scraps and their natural behaviour is not changed.
14. Example: Cover seems most important because the text explains foxes use brambles and undergrowth for hiding. Travel routes still matter because hedgerows help foxes move unseen, and food choice still matters because being omnivores lets foxes eat many things.
15. A fox that finds natural prey searches and hunts for animals like mice or rabbits, using its senses. A fox relying on scraps may spend more time checking places where food is left outside, like near bins or gardens.