

WHY HIPPO HAS NO HAIR



Have you ever noticed that Hippo, that mighty animal, has no hair? His skin is tough and thick but he is completely bald. Many years ago this was quite different and Hippo had just as much hair as all the other animals

Once upon a time Hippo made a new friend in the forest. His name was Fire and he was an unusual character. He and Hippo used to meet each other in the forest and they often walked all night together. It did not get dark for Hippo. He had light day and night.

One day, Hippo asked his friend to visit him. It was a custom for close friends to visit each other and Fire asked Hippo if he could come the following morning. Hippo was excited to hear this. However, he did notice that all the time the two were together fire stayed some distance from his friend.

When the day came Fire set out to visit his friend but the bushes wanted to run away from as fast as they could.

“You are hurting us and you are eating us up” cried the bushes. Fire ran as fast as he could to simply get to his friend’s home. Some grasses would cry, telling Fire that he was so cruel. He was also killing living organisms which grew in the grass. They told him that he had no mercy. They wondered how he got into friendship with Hippo.

Soon he managed to reach to his friend’s home and he was warmly welcomed. Hippo asked his friend to sit down.

“Where can I sit, my friend?” asked Fire.

“On my bed”, replied Hippo but his bed was made of dry grass and in no time his bed caught fire. He could feel the heat, but he did not want to shame his friend by telling him how bad he felt.

The bed was almost burnt and Fire had reached the wall. Fire wanted to survive and had nowhere else to go. He burnt Hippo’s hair!

Hippo had to run to the river where he used to bathe and drink. He jumped into the river with an enormous splash but by that time his hair had completely gone. Fire could not follow him and had to stop at the water's edge.

It was very cool in the river. He was more comfortable there. From that time onwards, Hippo had no hair and lived in the water where he was safe from Fire.

Naomi Mizeck of Matenje Primary School contributed this story.

This story tells us something about fire. Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Or a mixture of the two?

What does Hippo learn about Fire?

The story also tells us something about friendship. What might Hippo learn about choosing his friends?

What are the characteristics of hippos that the story is explaining?

Do you know any other stories that try to explain something about the features of an animal?