

# THE SLOTH

The word “sloth” can mean two different things. It can mean great laziness. It can also refer to an unusual looking animal. The sloth seems to have the coat of a shaggy dog and the body of a monkey. It has a cuddly face that looks like a blend of animals. Why is it called a sloth? Well, it appears to be incredibly lazy.

## RESTING

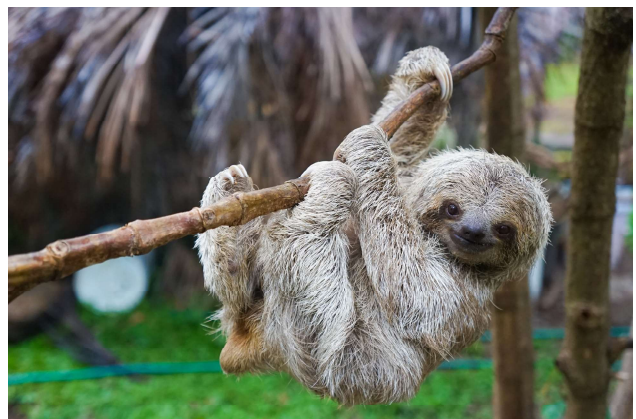
Sloths spend a huge amount of time resting or sleeping, but it isn't due to laziness. It is because they need to save their energy. Their diet consists of leaves from the trees where they live and rest. These leaves are not very high in **nutrients**. The sloths have a diet that will keep them alive and meet their needs. It just doesn't give them a high amount of energy.

## MOVING SLOW

Sloths sleep and rest twenty hours in one day! That means they're active and awake only about four hours each day. Sloths move so slowly and so little that **algae** starts to grow on their fur! Algae usually only grows on stagnant water or non-moving objects like rocks and trees! But, sloths use this to help them. Because they're so slow, you know that they wouldn't stand a chance against a super fast **predator**, such as a hawk. Hawks and many other predators rely on keen vision. Since sloths live in the green leaves of the trees, the algae helps them hide from predators. So does their slow movement. Sloths move so slowly that predators often don't see them move.

## PREDATORS

Sloths live the majority of their lives in the trees. They may only come down once a week! They eat, sleep, and raise families in the trees. This helps them save energy. But, it also makes them less likely to encounter certain predators that live on the ground and don't climb trees. If a sloth does run into a predator, it can't run away. It lacks the strength and **agility** of a more active animal. However, sloths have long, sharp claws. These claws help them drag themselves up tree bark and across the ground. In a life or death situation, the sloth slashes away with its claws. It hisses, bites, and scratches. It may be enough to get the attacker away. Sloths are not fast, but they use their **natural defenses** to the best of their abilities. They make their lazy lifestyle work for them!



Baby sloth in tree in Costa Rica

# GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

## Introduction

## Body

Subtopic:

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## Body

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## Body

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## Conclusion

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