

Name: _____ Date: _____

Key Vocabulary

roadside zoo	a place that keeps animals in small, cramped, or dirty cages and typically doesn't give them the care they need and deserve
morbidly obese	so overweight that it's dangerously unhealthy and moving around is difficult
dental disease	teeth and gums that aren't healthy, which can cause pain, infections, and other health problems
naturalistic	something that is very similar to what is found in nature
thriving	doing very well; being happy and healthy
accredited sanctuary	a place where animals are safe and cared for and that has a special certificate guaranteeing that it takes proper care of animals

Dillan's New Life

Dillan was kept at a place called the Union County Sportsmen's Club, a **roadside zoo** in Pennsylvania, for 10 long years. (Before that, he was privately owned for an unknown amount of time, making it difficult to determine his age.) He was forced to live all alone in an empty cage with a concrete floor. Workers fed him junk food instead of the healthy foods he would normally eat in nature. He became **morbidly obese** because of the unhealthy food, and the enclosure he was kept in prevented him from exercising or doing any of the things bears love and need to do. The owners of the roadside zoo knew that Dillan was suffering from painful **dental disease** because the government had warned them about it many times. But they didn't provide him with veterinary treatment.



Luckily for Dillan, kind people pushed for him to be rescued—and they were successful! He was taken to The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado, where he got a new life. An animal sanctuary is a place where animals are cared for and protected for the rest of their lives.

Once Dillan had arrived at the sanctuary, veterinarians performed emergency dental surgery to remove the teeth that were causing him pain. His new home was a massive **naturalistic** habitat where his needs were met. He was **thriving**. He spent his days splashing in the water, stretching, sunbathing, and hanging out with other rescued bears named Sun, Moon, and Lily (who had become his new best friend). In his new home, Dillan was always treated with the kindness that bears and all animals deserve. He lived to an old age and passed away peacefully in early 2024.

Thanks to the work of caring people who took action, the Union County Sportsmen's Club is not allowed to keep bears or many other types of animals anymore. Dillan's story had a happy ending, but many bears and other animals are still suffering like he once was. Roadside zoos are no place for animals. You can help animals like Dillan by viewing them in their natural habitats, at **accredited sanctuaries**, or in television programs that film them only in their natural homes and don't interfere with their lives. You can also speak up when people aren't treating them kindly.

Comprehension Questions: 'Dillan's New Life'

1. Describe Dillan's life before he was rescued. How do you think he felt?

2. How was Dillan's life better at The Wild Animal Sanctuary than it had been at the Union County Sportsmen's Club?

3. How do you feel about the way Dillan was treated for 10 years at the Union County Sportsmen's Club before he was rescued? Why do you feel this way?

4. How can you help bears and other animals who are suffering in roadside zoos?

Answer Sheet: ‘Dillan’s New Life’

1. Describe Dillan’s life before he was rescued. How do you think he felt?

Answer: Dillan’s life was miserable because he lived in a cage and didn’t have anything to do. He was fed junk food, didn’t get to exercise, became overweight, and had painful teeth. (Literal)

Possible answer: I think he felt sad and wished he was in his natural home in the wild. (Inferential)

2. How was Dillan’s life better at The Wild Animal Sanctuary than it had been at the Union County Sportsmen’s Club?

Possible answer: I think Dillan was happier in his new home because he was treated better. He had more room, better food, medical care, friends, and the freedom to do things he liked. He didn’t have any of those things where he was kept before. (Inferential)



3. How do you feel about the way Dillan was treated for 10 years at the Union County Sportsmen’s Club before he was rescued? Why do you feel this way?

Possible answer: I feel very upset about how Dillan was treated. People should be kind to animals and take care of them, not make them suffer. (Evaluative)

4. How can you help bears and other animals who are suffering in roadside zoos?

Answer: I can help bears and other animals by looking at them in nature, not in cages. I can visit animals who live at accredited sanctuaries or watch television programs about animals. I can use my voice to speak up for animals when people don’t treat them kindly. (Literal)