

Porcupines and their quills (for a 6-year-old)

A porcupine is an animal covered in quills. Quills are very sharp hairs that help keep the porcupine safe.

1. What are quills?

Quills are like tiny, sharp tubes made of the same stuff as your hair. Some quills are hollow, which means they have air inside, a bit like a straw.

2. How do quills protect?

- If something tries to hurt the porcupine, the porcupine turns and the quills stick out.
- The sharp points and tiny barbs make other animals stop and go away.
- Porcupines do not throw their quills — the quills can come off if touched or pressed, but they don't fly at you.

3. How do quills help with swimming?

Because some quills are hollow, they can trap air and make the porcupine lighter in the water. This helps the porcupine float while it paddles with its feet, so it can swim across rivers.

4. Quick safety and fun facts

- Porcupines are not trying to be mean — they use quills to protect themselves.
- If you see a porcupine, stay at a safe distance and be quiet so it can go away.
- Porcupines can climb trees and sometimes swim — their quills help them stay safe and float.

Short recap: Quills are sharp, some are hollow like straws, they protect porcupines, and the hollow quills can help the porcupine float when it swims.