Name: _____ Date: _____

Earthworms Help the Soil

Circle group

An earthworm has no legs. It has no eyes. It has no bones. But it has an important job. It helps make soil better for plants.

An earthworm lives underground. It moves by stretching its long body and then squeezing it short. It digs tunnels in the dirt as it goes.

The tunnels help. Air and water slip down in them. Plant roots can grow deep.

An earthworm eats bits of old leaves. Then it leaves tiny bits of waste called castings. Castings are good food for plants.

After rain, you may see worms on the sidewalk. Worms breathe through their skin. Their skin must stay damp. In the sun, a worm can dry out fast.

Questions

1. Does an earthworm have legs?

_____

_____

2. How does an earthworm move?

_____

_____

3. How do the tunnels help plants?

_____

_____

4. What are castings?

_____

_____

5. Why is a sunny sidewalk bad for a worm?

_____

_____

Words to know

soil: the dirt that plants grow in
tunnel: a long path that is dug under the ground
castings: the waste an earthworm leaves in the soil
damp: a little bit wet
squeezing: pressing something tight

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Earthworms Help the Soil

Triangle group

An earthworm has no legs, no eyes, and no bones. It still has an important job. It helps make soil better for plants.

An earthworm lives underground. It moves by stretching its long body and then squeezing it short. As it moves, it digs tunnels in the dirt.

The tunnels are useful. Air and water can slip down through them. Plant roots can follow the tunnels and grow deep.

An earthworm eats bits of old leaves and other dead plants. Then it leaves behind tiny bits of waste called castings. Castings are good food for plants.

After a rain, you may see earthworms on the sidewalk. Their tunnels may be full of water. Worms breathe through their skin, and their skin must stay damp. If the sun comes out, a worm can dry out quickly.

Questions

1. Does an earthworm have legs?

_____

_____

2. How does an earthworm move?

_____

_____

3. How do the tunnels help plants?

_____

_____

4. What are castings?

_____

_____

5. Why is it a problem for a worm to stay on a sidewalk in the sun?

_____

_____

Words to know

soil: the dirt that plants grow in
tunnel: a long path that is dug under the ground
castings: the waste an earthworm leaves in the soil
damp: a little bit wet
squeezing: pressing something tight

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Earthworms Help the Soil

Square group

An earthworm has no legs, no eyes, and no bones, yet it performs an important job: it helps make the soil healthier for plants.

An earthworm spends its life underground. It moves by stretching its long body out and then squeezing it short again. While it travels, it digs tunnels through the dirt.

Those tunnels are remarkably useful. Air and water can slip down through them, and plant roots can follow them and grow deep into the ground.

An earthworm eats bits of old leaves and other dead plants. Afterward, it leaves behind tiny pieces of waste called castings, which make excellent food for plants.

After a heavy rain, you might notice earthworms on the sidewalk, because their tunnels may be full of water. Worms breathe through their skin, so their skin must stay damp. If the sun comes out, a worm can dry out very quickly.

Questions

1. Does an earthworm have legs, eyes, or bones?

_____

_____

2. In what way does an earthworm travel?

_____

_____

3. How do an earthworm's tunnels help plants?

_____

_____

4. What are castings, and why do plants like them?

_____

_____

5. Why is it dangerous for a worm to stay on a sidewalk when the sun comes out?

_____

_____

Words to know

soil: the dirt that plants grow in
tunnel: a long path that is dug under the ground
castings: the waste an earthworm leaves in the soil
damp: a little bit wet
squeezing: pressing something tight

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Earthworms Help the Soil

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Earthworms Help the Soil

Easier · 116 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.8

1. No. It has no legs, no eyes, and no bones.
2. It stretches its long body and then squeezes it short.
3. Air and water slip down, and roots can grow deep.
4. Tiny bits of waste that are good food for plants.
5. Its skin must stay damp, and the sun can dry it out fast.

Triangle: Earthworms Help the Soil

This passage · 135 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.1

1. No. It has no legs, no eyes, and no bones.
2. It stretches its long body and then squeezes it short.
3. Air and water slip down through them, and roots can follow them and grow deep.
4. Tiny bits of waste that an earthworm leaves behind, which are good food for plants.
5. Its skin must stay damp to breathe, and the sun can dry it out quickly.

Square: Earthworms Help the Soil

Harder · 147 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5

1. No. It has none of them.
2. It stretches its long body out and then squeezes it short again.
3. Air and water slip down through them, and roots can follow them and grow deep.
4. Castings are tiny pieces of waste that an earthworm leaves behind, and they make excellent food for plants.
5. A worm breathes through its skin, which must stay damp, and the sun can dry it out very quickly.