Name: _____ Date: _____

The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

Circle group

Leafcutter ants march in long lines to their nest. Each ant holds a piece of leaf over its head like a green sail. The ants do not eat the leaves. They use them to grow a fungus in the nest. The fungus is their food.

A young ant named Pim wanted to bring home the biggest leaf piece ever. The other ants cut small, thin pieces from a soft bush. Pim picked a thick leaf from a tough old plant. It took her twice as long to cut. She wobbled all the way home under the weight.

At the nest, the gardener ants sniffed her leaf and shook their heads. "This one is too hard," said the oldest. "The fungus will not grow on it. We need soft leaves."

Pim felt bad. She had worked hard, but she had not asked what the nest needed.

The next day she walked beside a wise ant and asked questions. This time she cut a small, soft piece. It was the smallest leaf she had ever carried. The gardeners waved their feelers happily.

Questions

1. Why do leafcutter ants carry leaves to the nest?

_____

_____

2. What kind of leaf did Pim pick?

_____

_____

3. Why did the gardener ants say no to Pim's leaf?

_____

_____

4. What did Pim forget to do?

_____

_____

5. What did Pim do differently the next day?

_____

_____

6. What is the lesson of this story?

_____

_____

Words to know

fungus: a living thing, like a mushroom, that grows without sunlight

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: _____

The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

Triangle group

Leafcutter ants march in long lines to their nest, each one holding a piece of leaf above its head like a little green sail. The ants do not eat the leaves. They use them to grow a special fungus in the nest, and the fungus is their food.

A young ant named Pim wanted to bring back the biggest leaf piece ever. While the others cut small, thin pieces from a soft, light-green bush, Pim chose a thick leaf from a tough old plant. It took her twice as long to cut. She staggered all the way home, wobbling under the weight.

At the nest, the gardener ants sniffed her leaf and shook their heads. "This one is too hard," said the oldest. "The fungus will not grow on it. We need the soft leaves."

Pim felt her cheeks burn, though ants do not blush as people do. She had worked hard, but she had never asked what the nest needed.

The next day she walked beside an experienced ant and asked questions along the way. This time she cut a small, soft piece. It was the smallest leaf she had ever carried, and the gardeners welcomed it with a happy wave of their antennae.

Questions

1. Why do leafcutter ants carry leaves to their nest?

_____

_____

2. What kind of leaf did Pim choose?

_____

_____

3. Why did the gardener ants reject Pim's leaf?

_____

_____

4. What did Pim forget to do before she cut her leaf?

_____

_____

5. How did Pim change her plan the next day?

_____

_____

6. What is the lesson of this story?

_____

_____

Words to know

fungus: a living thing, like a mushroom, that grows without sunlight
staggered: walked in an unsteady way, as if about to fall
experienced: having done something many times and knowing it well
antennae: the two thin feelers on an insect's head

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: _____

The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

Square group

Leafcutter ants march in long, orderly lines to their nest, each one holding a piece of leaf above its head like a little green sail. The ants do not eat the leaves themselves. Instead they use them to cultivate a special fungus in the nest, and that fungus is their food.

A young ant named Pim was determined to bring back the biggest piece of leaf that anyone had ever seen. While the other ants snipped small, thin pieces from a soft, light-green bush, Pim selected a thick leaf from a tough old plant. It took her twice as long to cut, and she staggered all the way home, wobbling beneath the weight.

At the nest, the gardener ants sniffed her leaf and shook their heads. "This one is far too hard," said the oldest of them. "The fungus will not grow on it. We need the soft leaves."

Pim felt deeply embarrassed. She had worked tremendously hard, but she had never thought to ask what the nest actually needed.

The next day she walked beside an experienced ant and asked questions along the way. This time she cut a small, soft piece. It was the smallest leaf she had ever carried, yet the gardeners welcomed it with a cheerful wave of their antennae.

Questions

1. Why do leafcutter ants carry pieces of leaf to their nest?

_____

_____

2. What sort of leaf did Pim select?

_____

_____

3. Why did the gardener ants refuse Pim's leaf?

_____

_____

4. What had Pim never thought to do before cutting her leaf?

_____

_____

5. How did Pim change her approach the next day?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does this story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

fungus: a living thing, like a mushroom, that grows without sunlight
staggered: walked in an unsteady way, as if about to fall
experienced: having done something many times and knowing it well
antennae: the two thin feelers on an insect's head

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: The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

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

Circle: The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

Easier · 180 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.4

1. They use the leaves to grow a fungus, which is their food.
2. A thick leaf from a tough old plant.
3. It was too hard for the fungus to grow on.
4. She did not ask what the nest needed.
5. She walked with a wise ant, asked questions, and cut a small, soft piece.
6. Hard work only helps when you find out what is really needed.

Triangle: The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

This passage · 206 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.5

1. They use the leaves to grow a fungus, which is their food.
2. A thick leaf from a tough old plant.
3. It was too hard for the fungus to grow on.
4. She did not ask what the nest needed.
5. She walked with an experienced ant, asked questions, and cut a small, soft piece.
6. Hard work only helps when you find out what is truly needed.

Square: The Leafcutter Ant Who Carried the Wrong Leaf

Harder · 215 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.9

1. They use the leaves to cultivate a fungus, which is their food.
2. A thick leaf from a tough old plant.
3. It was too hard for the fungus to grow on.
4. Ask what the nest actually needed.
5. She walked beside an experienced ant, asked questions, and cut a small, soft piece.
6. Hard work is only useful when you first learn what is truly needed.