



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 4

Answer Key

How Monarch Butterflies Find Their Way Home

A Journey Bigger Than Its Traveler

Every fall, millions of monarch butterflies leave their summer homes in the United States and Canada and fly all the way to central Mexico, a journey of up to 3,000 miles. That distance is remarkable on its own, but what makes it even more surprising is that no single monarch ever makes the full round trip. The butterflies that arrive in Mexico are actually the great grandchildren of the ones that left the year before.

How Do They Know Where to Go?

Scientists have studied this mystery for decades, and they now believe monarchs use a combination of tools to navigate. They can sense the position of the sun in the sky, adjusting their direction as the sun moves throughout the day. Some researchers believe monarchs may also sense the Earth's magnetic field, a bit like an internal compass, which helps explain how they can find their way even on cloudy days when the sun is hidden.

A Journey Passed Down Through Generations

Because it takes four or five generations of monarchs to complete one full migration cycle, scientists still do not fully understand how each new generation knows exactly where to go, since none of them have made the journey before. Many researchers believe the information may be passed down genetically, built into the butterflies before they are even born, rather than learned through experience.

Why This Matters

Monarch butterfly populations have declined significantly in recent decades, largely due to habitat loss along their migration route. Understanding how monarchs navigate helps scientists and conservationists protect the specific resting and feeding areas the butterflies depend on during their journey, which may be critical to keeping this remarkable migration alive for future generations.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. According to the passage, how far can a monarch butterfly's migration journey be?

Answer: b) Up to 3,000 miles

2. Why is it surprising that monarchs complete this migration?

Answer: a) No single monarch makes the full round trip itself

3. What are two tools scientists believe monarchs use to navigate?

Answer: b) The position of the sun and possibly Earth's magnetic field

4. According to the passage, why does monarch population decline matter?

Answer: b) It may threaten the survival of this migration for future generations

True or False

5. A single monarch butterfly completes the entire round-trip migration by itself.

Answer: False

6. Scientists believe monarchs may sense Earth's magnetic field.

Answer: True

7. Monarch butterfly populations have remained exactly the same for decades.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. It takes four or five _____ of monarchs to complete one full migration cycle.

Answer: generations

9. Habitat _____ along the migration route has caused monarch populations to decline.

Answer: loss

Think and Explain

10. This passage is organized with headings for each section. How do these headings help a reader understand the passage's main ideas? Use one heading as an example in your answer.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that headings break the passage into clear sections and preview what each part will be about, helping readers locate information and understand the passage's structure, for example 'Why This Matters' signals that the final section will explain the importance of the topic.

11. What is the main idea of this passage as a whole? Explain in one or two sentences, using details from more than one section.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that monarch butterflies complete a remarkable multi-generational migration using natural navigation tools that scientists are still working to fully understand, and that protecting their habitat is important to preserving this migration.