Beetles at Work

Use article details to explain what dung beetles change.

4.LF.20.a "Interpret facts from an informational article, using details and examples from the text to explain the interpretation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two things dung beetles do, then circle a detail that shows what each action changes.

What Dung Beetles Do

1. On a warm day, a fresh pile of animal droppings may draw dung beetles. The beetles use dung as food, and many place their eggs inside it. Some beetles shape a piece into a ball and push it away from the crowded pile. Moving the ball gives them a supply of dung without fighting as many other beetles for it.

2. Other dung beetles dig tunnels beneath a pile and pull bits of dung underground. Their tunnels make spaces where air and water can move through the soil. As buried dung breaks down, it returns nutrients to the soil that plants can use. Some beetles stay inside the pile instead of rolling or tunneling, so not every dung beetle makes a ball.

3. Dung can carry seeds from plants that an animal has eaten. Some seeds pass through the animal without being crushed. When beetles bury dung, they may bury those seeds too. A buried seed may be less likely to be eaten by an animal on the ground. If the seed has the right conditions, it can sprout into a new plant.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does pushing a dung ball away from a crowded pile suggest about what the beetle needs? Use a detail from the article.

2. How might tunneling dung beetles help plants? Explain using details from the article.

3. Why might burying dung help some seeds become new plants? Use two details from the article.

4. A visitor says, "Every dung beetle rolls a ball." How does the article show this idea is incorrect?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three or four sentences explaining how dung beetles connect animals and plants. Use details from at least two paragraphs and explain how those details work together.

ANSWER KEY # Beetles at Work

GRADE 4 · 4.LF.20.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two things dung beetles do, then circle a detail that shows what each action changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does pushing a dung ball away from a crowded pile suggest about what the beetle needs? Use a detail from the article.	**The beetle needs dung for food or eggs. Pushing a ball away gives it dung without as much competition from other beetles.**
2	How might tunneling dung beetles help plants? Explain using details from the article.	**Their tunnels let air and water move through the soil, and the buried dung breaks down into nutrients plants can use.**
3	Why might burying dung help some seeds become new plants? Use two details from the article.	**Beetles may bury seeds along with dung. A buried seed may be less likely to be eaten and can sprout if conditions are right.**
4	A visitor says, “Every dung beetle rolls a ball.” How does the article show this idea is incorrect?	**Some dung beetles dig tunnels and pull dung underground, while others stay inside the pile. Not all of them roll balls.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dung beetles connect animals and plants by moving animal waste into the ground. Beetles bury dung, and as it breaks down, the soil gains nutrients plants can use. They may also bury seeds left in the waste, giving some seeds a chance to sprout.

Accept interpretations supported by accurate passage details. For Part 3, look for a clear connection between animal droppings, a beetle's action, and a possible effect on plants.