Life in a Log

Use facts and clues to find a text's central idea.

RI.3.2 "Identify implicit and cite explicit information from an informational text to determine the central idea of a text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one fact in each paragraph that shows how the fallen log helps living things. Circle the time words that show when the log changes.

What Happens to a Fallen Log?

1. When a tree falls in a forest, it does not stop being useful. At first, its wood is hard, but rain and tiny fungi begin to soften it. Fungi grow through the wood and break it into smaller pieces. Beetles crawl into cracks and lay eggs there. Their young feed inside the log, hidden from many hungry birds.

2. Over time, the log becomes softer and holds water after rain. A salamander may rest underneath it, where the ground stays cool and damp. Some birds tap at the wood to find the insects inside. Moss can grow on the damp surface, too. To a person walking past, the log may look still, but many living things use it.

3. Years later, the log may crumble into bits that mix with the soil. This broken wood returns nutrients to the ground as it decays. Small plants can take root in the soft material and use those nutrients to grow. The fallen tree has changed shape, but it is still part of the forest. Even as it breaks down, it helps new life grow.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two facts in paragraph 1 show that living things use the log? What do those facts tell you?

2. The log looks still to a person walking past. What can you figure out is happening there? Use one fact from paragraph 2.

3. What is the central idea of the whole passage? Support it with one fact from paragraph 1 and one from paragraph 3.

4. How does the log change from paragraph 1 to paragraph 3? What stays the same about its role in the forest?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a trail crew finds a fallen log beside a path. Write a two-sentence note explaining why they should leave it there. Use one fact from paragraph 2 and one from paragraph 3, and add an idea you can figure out but the passage does not say directly.

ANSWER KEY

Life in a Log

GRADE 3 · RI.3.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one fact in each paragraph that shows how the fallen log helps living things. Circle the time words that show when the log changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two facts in paragraph 1 show that living things use the log? What do those facts tell you?	**Fungi grow through the wood, and beetles lay eggs in its cracks. The log gives living things a place to grow or shelter.**
2	The log looks still to a person walking past. What can you figure out is happening there? Use one fact from paragraph 2.	**Living things are active around the log. For example, birds tap the wood to find insects inside.**
3	What is the central idea of the whole passage? Support it with one fact from paragraph 1 and one from paragraph 3.	**A fallen log helps forest life as it breaks down. Beetles lay eggs in its cracks, and later its broken wood adds nutrients to the soil for small plants.**
4	How does the log change from paragraph 1 to paragraph 3? What stays the same about its role in the forest?	**The log changes from hard wood to bits that mix with soil. It helps living things at both stages.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Leave this fallen log beside the path because a salamander can rest under it, and its broken wood adds nutrients to the soil. If the log stays, more forest animals and plants may find what they need here.

Accept other accurate facts and reasonable inferences supported by the passage. For the open task, look for exactly two sentences, a fact from each named paragraph, and an idea that goes beyond what the text states.