Worm Words at Work

Read how exact words explain an earthworm's work.

W.3.2.d "Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the precise words for the worm's gripping bristles, the space it makes underground, and its waste. Circle nearby words that show why each one matters.

An Earthworm in the Garden

1. After rain, an earthworm slides across the school garden. Its long body is made of many small sections called segments. Tiny bristles called setae grip the ground. The worm stretches its front end forward, then pulls the rest of its body along. On rough dirt, the bristles help hold one part of the body still while another part moves.

2. An earthworm also travels below the surface. It pushes through damp soil and leaves behind a narrow tunnel. Air and rainwater can move into the tunnel. That space helps roots spread through the soil. As the worm digs, it mixes soil from different depths. These actions can help keep garden soil loose enough for roots to grow.

3. Earthworms eat bits of dead leaves and other decaying plant matter. Inside the worm, this food breaks down. The worm leaves behind tiny bits of waste called castings. Castings contain nutrients that plants can use. Gardeners sometimes notice small, dark piles of castings on top of the soil. By eating dead plants and leaving castings, earthworms help return nutrients to the soil.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which word names the worm's tiny gripping bristles? What do they help the worm do?

2. A writer says, "The worm makes a hole." Which word from the passage could replace "hole"? Why is it more exact?

3. Which word names the worm's waste? Why might a gardener care about it?

4. Find the verb that tells how the worm gets through damp soil and the verb that tells what it does to soil from different depths.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence note for a gardener explaining why an earthworm is useful. Use at least three precise words from the passage, and explain two different ways the worm helps soil or plants in your own words.

ANSWER KEY

Worm Words at Work

GRADE 3 · W.3.2.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the precise words for the worm's gripping bristles, the space it makes underground, and its waste. Circle nearby words that show why each one matters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which word names the worm's tiny gripping bristles? What do they help the worm do?	**Setae grip the ground and help the worm move.**
2	A writer says, "The worm makes a hole." Which word from the passage could replace "hole"? Why is it more exact?	**Tunnel is more exact because it names the narrow space the worm leaves as it moves through soil.**
3	Which word names the worm's waste? Why might a gardener care about it?	**Castings contain nutrients that plants can use.**
4	Find the verb that tells how the worm gets through damp soil and the verb that tells what it does to soil from different depths.	**Pushes and mixes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An earthworm makes a tunnel that lets air and rainwater move into the soil. As it digs, it mixes soil and leaves room for roots to spread. Its castings contain nutrients that plants can use.

For the marking job, look for setae, tunnel, and castings, with nearby phrases about gripping, letting air or water enter or roots spread, and providing nutrients. Accept other accurate wording in the written responses.