Life in a Log

Find the facts that tell a fallen tree's story

4.2.R.4 "Students will summarize facts and details from an informational text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline one important fact in each paragraph that helps explain what happens to a fallen log, then number your underlined facts 1, 2, and 3 in the order the passage tells them.

What Happens to a Fallen Tree?

1. When a tree falls in a forest, its story is not over. The trunk becomes a fallen log, a home for many small animals. Beetles crawl beneath loose bark, while salamanders hide in the cool, damp space below. Birds may search the wood for insects to eat. These visitors use the log for food or shelter, even though the tree no longer has leaves.

2. The log also changes as it lies on the ground. Fungi grow through its wood and break it down for food. Some fungi send up mushrooms, which are only the visible part of the fungus. Insects can chew tunnels in the wood, making more openings for air and water. Over many years, the firm trunk becomes soft and begins to crumble.

3. As the log crumbles, its small pieces mix with the soil. Nutrients once held in the tree return to the ground, where living plants can use them. Moss may cover the soft wood, and a tiny seedling may take root on it. A fallen log can support new life while slowly becoming part of the forest floor. Its changes can take many years.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize how animals use the fallen log. Include two details from the first paragraph.

2. Summarize how the log changes in the second paragraph. Include two details.

3. Summarize how the crumbling log helps new plants. Include two details from the third paragraph.

4. Summarize how insects both use and change the log. Use facts from two paragraphs.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three- or four-sentence summary of the whole passage in your own words. Include the most important change from each paragraph, but leave out small details.

ANSWER KEY

Life in a Log

GRADE 4 · 4.2.R.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline one important fact in each paragraph that helps explain what happens to a fallen log, then number your underlined facts 1, 2, and 3 in the order the passage tells them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize how animals use the fallen log. Include two details from the first paragraph.	**The log gives animals food and shelter. Beetles hide beneath its bark, and birds search it for insects to eat.**
2	Summarize how the log changes in the second paragraph. Include two details.	**Fungi break down the wood, and insects chew tunnels in it. Over time, the trunk becomes soft and starts to crumble.**
3	Summarize how the crumbling log helps new plants. Include two details from the third paragraph.	**Pieces of the log mix with soil and return nutrients that plants can use. A seedling may also take root on the soft wood.**
4	Summarize how insects both use and change the log. Use facts from two paragraphs.	**Beetles use the loose bark as shelter. Insects also chew tunnels in the wood, making openings for air and water.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A fallen tree becomes a place where animals find food and shelter. As fungi break down the wood, the log slowly gets softer and crumbles. Its pieces mix with the soil and return nutrients that living plants can use. New plants may grow on the log as it becomes part of the forest floor.

Accept summaries in students' own words that capture the main idea and requested supporting facts. For Part 3, look for the sequence of animal use, wood breaking down, and nutrients supporting new plants.