Life in a Log

Use text features to follow a fallen log's changing role.

4.6.R.2 "Students will identify and use text features (e.g., graphics, captions, headings/subheadings, bold/italicized words, charts, tables, legends) to comprehend informational texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each subheading, circle each bold word in the body, and number the paragraphs 1 to 3 to track how a fallen log changes.

A Small World in a Fallen Log

1. **Hidden Homes** A fallen log may look empty, but many small animals use it. The space beneath the log stays damp and cool, even on a warm day. A salamander can hide there because its skin must stay moist. Beetles may crawl under loose bark, too. The log acts as a **shelter**, a place that helps these animals stay safe from hot sun and hungry birds.

2. **Wood Workers** A log does not stay hard forever. **Fungi**, including the kind that make mushrooms, grow through the wood. They break it into smaller pieces as they get food from it. Beetle larvae may also tunnel inside and eat bits of wood. These living things help the log slowly *decay*, or break down. That change can take many years.

3. **Back to the Ground** Over time, the soft log crumbles. Its tiny pieces mix with soil on the forest floor. As fungi break down the wood, they release **nutrients**, materials that plants need to grow. Young trees can use nutrients from the soil. A fallen log is not just leftover wood. It can support life long after the tree falls.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which subheading helps you find out where a salamander can hide? What detail below it confirms your choice?

2. Under "Wood Workers," which bold word names living things that break down wood? What do they do to the wood?

3. Which subheading points to what happens after the log becomes soft? Use the bold word in that section to explain the result.

4. How does the passage title fit the text? Use one detail from each of two different headed sections.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new two-sentence sidebar explaining why a forest visitor should leave a fallen log in place. Give it your own heading and write one important word in bold letters, then add one sentence explaining how those two features help readers.

ANSWER KEY # Life in a Log

GRADE 4 · 4.6.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each subheading, circle each bold word in the body, and number the paragraphs 1 to 3 to track how a fallen log changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which subheading helps you find out where a salamander can hide? What detail below it confirms your choice?	**"Hidden Homes." The passage says a salamander can hide beneath the log, where it stays damp and cool.**
2	Under "Wood Workers," which bold word names living things that break down wood? What do they do to the wood?	**Fungi. They grow through the wood and break it into smaller pieces.**
3	Which subheading points to what happens after the log becomes soft? Use the bold word in that section to explain the result.	**"Back to the Ground." The log crumbles, and fungi release nutrients that plants need to grow.**
4	How does the passage title fit the text? Use one detail from each of two different headed sections.	**The log is like a small world because salamanders and beetles find shelter in it, while fungi grow through its wood and break it down.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Keep the Log

A fallen log gives small creatures a safe place to hide while fungi break down its wood. Leaving the log on the forest floor protects this **shelter** and lets the wood become part of the soil. My heading gives the main idea, and the bold word points to one reason the log matters.

Accept other accurate details from the named sections. For the sidebar, look for an original heading, two factual sentences, one bold key word, and a sentence explaining how both features guide the reader.