5th grade reading worksheets

12 sheets, each passage with its questions, with the answer keys together from page 14.

	Sheet	Key	Page
1.	Choosing Teams RL.5.1	14	2
2.	Jamal's Recital Diary RL.5.1	15	3
3.	The Case of the Missing Socks RL.5.1	16	4
4.	The Dog by the Fountain RL.5.1	17	5
5.	Wolves Return to Yellowstone RI.5.1	18	6
6.	How a Tsunami Travels RI.5.1	19	7
7.	How a Glacier Is Born RI.5.1	20	8
8.	The International Space Station RI.5.1	21	9
9.	How Bats Find Food in the Dark RI.5.1	22	10
10.	The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird RI.5.1	23	11
11.	Venn diagram RL.5.3		12
12.	Main idea and details RI.5.2		13

Choosing Teams



Read the story. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Theo had waited all year to be a team captain in gym class, and on Friday Coach Rivera finally called his name. The other captain was Ruby, the fastest runner in the whole fourth grade. Theo knew exactly whom he would pick first. His best friend, Felix, was standing right in front, grinning and giving him a thumbs-up.

But Theo also noticed Hamid, a new boy who had joined the class that week. Hamid stood alone at the back with his hands in his pockets, staring at the floor. Theo remembered his own first day at this school, when nobody had known his name and he had been picked last for kickball. He could still remember how hot his face had felt.

"Theo, it's your pick," said Coach Rivera. Theo took a deep breath and said, "Hamid." Felix's smile disappeared for a second, but then Ruby picked him, and the soccer game began. Hamid turned out to be a terrific goalie. He blocked three shots in a row, and Theo's team won by one goal.

After class, Felix walked over and said quietly, "You didn't pick me." Theo explained that he had known Felix would get picked anyway, but Hamid didn't know anybody yet. Felix thought about it for a moment and then nodded. At lunch, he waved Hamid over to their table, and by the end of the week, the three boys were practicing goal kicks together at every recess.

1. **What choice did Theo have to make when he became captain?**

2. **Theo remembered "how hot his face had felt" on his first day. What does this phrase tell you about how he felt, and which words help you tell?**

3. **Why did Theo pick Hamid first?**

4. **Do you think Theo was still a good friend to Felix? Why or why not?**

Jamal's Recital Diary



Read the story. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Monday, May 4: Ms. Okafor says the spring piano recital is in two weeks, and I have to play "Morning Song" from memory in front of the whole audience! My hands get sweaty just thinking about it.

Wednesday, May 6: I practiced today, but I keep messing up the same part, the fast notes near the end. Grandma says I should practice that part slowly, five times in a row, before I play the whole song.

Monday, May 11: Grandma's trick is working, because I can play the fast part without stopping now. I played the whole song for my little sister, Amani, who clapped and then asked if she could have a turn.

Saturday, May 16: When I sat down at the big piano for the recital today, my mind went blank for a second, so I looked down at my hands and started to play. Everything went fine until the fast part, when I hit a wrong note. I wanted to stop and run off the stage, but instead I remembered what Ms. Okafor always says: "Keep going, and nobody will notice." I kept playing to the end, and everybody clapped. Afterward, a man told me my song was his favorite of the day, and he never even noticed the wrong note!

Sunday, May 17: Today I asked Ms. Okafor for a new song, which is longer and harder than "Morning Song." I am still a little nervous, but now I know what to do.

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1. **What was Jamal worried about in his first diary entry?**

2. **At the recital, Jamal writes that his "mind went blank for a second." What does this mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **What did Jamal do when he hit a wrong note, and why?**

4. **How did Jamal change from his first diary entry to his last? Use details from the diary.**

The Case of the Missing Socks



Read the story. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Socks kept disappearing at the Novak house. First Dad lost a blue one, and then Grandpa lost a striped one. By Thursday, Wes had only one sock left from each of his pairs, so he decided to solve the case himself. He borrowed his mom's reading glasses, because he thought they made him look like a real detective, and he wrote "Suspects" at the top of a page in his notebook.

His first suspect was the washing machine, since Grandpa said that washing machines ate socks all the time. Wes sat in front of the machine for a whole load and watched every sock tumble around, but not one of them disappeared. His second suspect was his big sister, Petra. "Why would I want your smelly socks?" she asked, holding her nose, and Wes had to admit that she had a point.

That night, Wes heard a soft jingle in the hallway and peeked out of his room. Biscuit, the family's new puppy, was trotting by with a red sock in her mouth! Wes tiptoed after her into the laundry room, and there, behind the dryer, was Biscuit's secret nest, made of twenty-three socks, one slipper and Dad's missing tie.

The next morning, Wes read his report aloud at breakfast, and everyone laughed, even Dad. Then Mom bought Biscuit a squeaky toy shaped like a sock. Wes closed his notebook after writing one last line: "Case closed."

1. **What problem did the Novak family have?**

2. **Wes wrote "Suspects" at the top of a page. What is a suspect, and which words help you tell?**

3. **In what order did Wes check his suspects, and who turned out to be taking the socks?**

4. **Why do you think Mom bought Biscuit a squeaky toy shaped like a sock?**

The Dog by the Fountain

Read the story. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

On her way home from school, Ines saw a small brown dog sitting alone by the park fountain. It wore a green collar but had no tag, and when Ines knelt down, it wagged its tail and licked her hand. Ines had wanted a dog for as long as she could remember, but her mom always said their apartment was too small. Now a dog had found her instead, and maybe she could secretly keep it in her bedroom, at least for a little while.

Then she noticed the dog's neat, brushed fur. Someone was taking good care of this dog, and that person might be searching for it right now. Ines carried the dog home and explained everything to her mother. Together they made signs that said "FOUND: Small Brown Dog" with their phone number, and they hung them at the park, the bus stop and the corner store.

The next afternoon, the phone rang, and it was Mr. Haddad, an elderly neighbor who lived three streets away. His dog, Pepper, had slipped out of the gate while he was getting the mail. When he arrived, Pepper jumped straight into his arms. "My knees are not what they used to be," Mr. Haddad said, "and Pepper needs longer walks than I can give her. Would you like to walk her on Saturdays?"

Ines looked hopefully at her mother, who smiled and nodded. From then on, Ines and Pepper walked around the park together every Saturday morning.

1. **What choice did Ines have to make after she found the dog?**

2. **Pepper "slipped out of the gate." What does "slipped out" mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **Why did Ines decide that the dog probably had an owner?**

4. **Do you think Ines made a good choice? Give a reason from the story.**

Wolves Return to Yellowstone



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Wolf packs once roamed from the Arctic tundra all the way to Mexico. By the early 1900s, though, wolves had disappeared from most of the United States. They had lost their habitat, the wild places where they lived, and people had set out to kill them.

In 1973, the northern Rocky Mountain wolf was listed as an endangered species. This means it was in danger of dying out. The area around Yellowstone National Park was named one of three places where the wolves could recover. From 1995 to 1997, 41 wild wolves from Canada and northwest Montana were released in Yellowstone.

Wolves live in family groups called packs. In Yellowstone, the average pack size is 11.8 wolves. A pack defends its territory from other packs by howling and by marking it with scent.

In winter, 90 percent of the prey that Yellowstone's wolves hunt is elk. Many other animals share the meal. When wolves kill an elk, ravens and magpies arrive almost right away. Coyotes come soon after and wait nearby until the wolves are full. Bears try to chase the wolves away, and they usually succeed. Many other animals, from eagles to tiny creatures without backbones, eat what is left.

About half of Yellowstone's wolves are black, and most of the rest are gray. January 12, 2025, marked 30 years since wolves returned to the park.

1. **How many wolves were released in Yellowstone from 1995 to 1997, and where did they come from?**

2. **What does "habitat" mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?**

3. **What happens, in order, after wolves kill an elk?**

4. **Do you think bringing wolves back helped other animals in Yellowstone? Give a reason from the passage.**

How a Tsunami Travels



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

A tsunami is a series of extremely long waves in the ocean. The word comes from Japanese: “tsu” means harbor, and “name” means wave. It is incorrect to call a tsunami a tidal wave, because tsunamis are not related to tides. Tides come from the pull of the Sun and Moon.

Most tsunamis start with a large earthquake below or near the ocean floor. When the floor suddenly rises or drops, the water above it moves too. Landslides, volcanoes and even asteroids can also cause a tsunami. The waves then spread out in all directions.

In the deep ocean, a tsunami can move as fast as a jet plane, over 500 mph. It can cross an entire ocean in less than a day. Out there, its waves are rarely more than three feet high, so they are barely noticeable. When the waves enter shallow water near land, they slow to the speed of a car, about 20 or 30 mph. They also grow taller.

At the coast, a tsunami may look like a fast-rising flood or a wall of water. Sometimes the water suddenly pulls back first, showing the ocean floor, reefs and fish. A loud roar from the ocean, like a train or an airplane, can be another warning. Anyone on a beach who feels an earthquake should move quickly to high ground or inland, away from the water.

1. **What is the most common way a tsunami starts?**

2. **Out in the deep ocean, tsunami waves are “barely noticeable.” What does this mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **How is a tsunami in the deep ocean different from a tsunami in shallow water near land?**

4. **Why do you think people on a beach should move to high ground as soon as they feel an earthquake, without waiting for more signs?**

How a Glacier Is Born



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

A glacier is born high in the mountains, where the only precipitation that falls is snow. Precipitation is water that falls from the sky, like rain or snow. Up there, the snow does not melt away each year, and a slight dip in the mountainside catches it. Year after year, the snowflakes pile up into a deep snowpack.

Soon the weight of all that snow presses down on the flakes underneath. The fluffy flakes change into round grains of ice and, eventually, into solid ice. The ice crystals form slowly under pressure, and some individual crystals can grow to the size of a football. Air trapped between the snowflakes is frozen into the ice as well.

At last, the ice becomes too heavy for the dip to hold against gravity, and it begins to flow slowly downhill. Now that it is moving, it is a glacier. Like a river, it follows the easiest path down the mountain. Rocks caught in its lower layers grind away at the solid rock beneath it like stone tools, and in time the ice carves deep valleys shaped like the letter U.

In Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, some glaciers flow all the way down to the sea. These are called tidewater glaciers. Blocks of ice up to 200 feet high can break loose and crash into the water, which is called calving. As the icebergs melt, they pop and sizzle while ancient air escapes.

1. **Where is a glacier born?**

2. **What does “calving” mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **Tell in order how snowflakes become a glacier.**

4. **Why do you think icebergs pop and sizzle as they melt? Use the passage.**

The International Space Station

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

The International Space Station is a large spacecraft in orbit around Earth. It serves as a home where astronauts and cosmonauts live, and it is also a unique science laboratory. Several nations worked together to build and use it.

The station was assembled in space by astronauts, one part at a time. The first piece, a Russian control module called Zarya, was launched in November 1998. A module is one part of a spacecraft that is designed to do a particular task. About two weeks later, the space shuttle Endeavour brought a U.S. part called Unity, and the crew attached it to Zarya. The first crew arrived on Nov. 2, 2000, and people have lived on the station ever since. Construction was completed in 2011.

The station orbits Earth at an average height of about 250 miles. It travels at 17,500 mph, so it circles Earth every 90 minutes. Inside, it has as much room as a six-bedroom house, with six sleeping quarters, two bathrooms and a gym. On Earth, it would weigh almost one million pounds.

Crews on the station do research that could not be done anywhere else. Scientists study what happens to the body when people live in microgravity for a long time. Microgravity is a condition where gravity is so weak that things become weightless. NASA will use these lessons to send people farther into space than ever before.

1. **What two things is the space station?**

2. **What does “module” mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **Tell in order how the station was built and when people moved in.**

4. **Would you like to live on the space station for a few months? Give a reason from the passage.**

How Bats Find Food in the Dark



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Bats are flying mammals, and they are nocturnal, which means they are active at night. Many bats hunt insects in the dark, so how do they find such small prey? They use echolocation, which means they find their way and their food by listening for the echoes of their own calls.

First, a bat makes sound waves at frequencies too high for people to hear, called ultrasound. The sound waves bounce off objects around the bat. Then the sounds return to the bat's ears, which are finely tuned to recognize its own unique calls.

When a bat detects an insect it wants to eat, it produces a rapid series of calls to pinpoint the exact location of its prey. Then it swoops in and gulps the insect down. This is called a feeding buzz.

Bats can change their calls for different purposes, so they have searching calls, feeding calls and social calls. Each species of bat also has its own unique call pattern. Scientists can identify and study bats by recording their calls with special microphones and recording devices.

Bats that eat insects can eat 50 percent or more of their body weight in insects each night. In the United States, that adds up to more than $3.7 billion worth of pest control every year. When bats are around, there are fewer insect pests damaging crops, and farmers do not have to spend as much money on pesticides, the chemicals that kill pests.

1. **What do bats use to find insects in the dark?**

2. **What does "pinpoint" mean in the passage, and which words help you tell?**

3. **What happens, in order, during a feeding buzz?**

4. **Why do you think farmers might be glad to have bats living nearby?**

The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

The ruby-throated hummingbird is a tiny bird with brilliant, jewel-like red and green coloring. It is the only North American hummingbird that breeds, or has its young, east of the Great Plains.

Its head, back, wings and tail are covered in metallic green feathers, and its belly is white. A male has a brilliant red throat, while a female's throat is white. An adult is only 2.8 to 3.5 inches long, and it weighs about as much as a nickel.

A hummingbird feeds while hovering, sticking its long tongue into the center of a flower to draw out the nectar. It also drinks sugar water from backyard feeders and catches tiny insects when it can. Flying burns so much energy that it drinks up to half of its body weight in nectar and sugar water each day. It even defends its food against other hummingbirds.

The female does all the work of raising the young. She builds a tiny cup-shaped nest of grasses and plant fibers, often hiding it with lichens and dead leaves. Then she lays two white eggs, which hatch after 11 to 16 days.

A hummingbird's feet are so small that it cannot walk, so it can only scoot sideways along a perch. Yet when it migrates, it can fly straight across the Gulf of Mexico in a single flight.

1. **How can you tell a male ruby-throated hummingbird from a female?**

2. **What does "breeds" mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?**

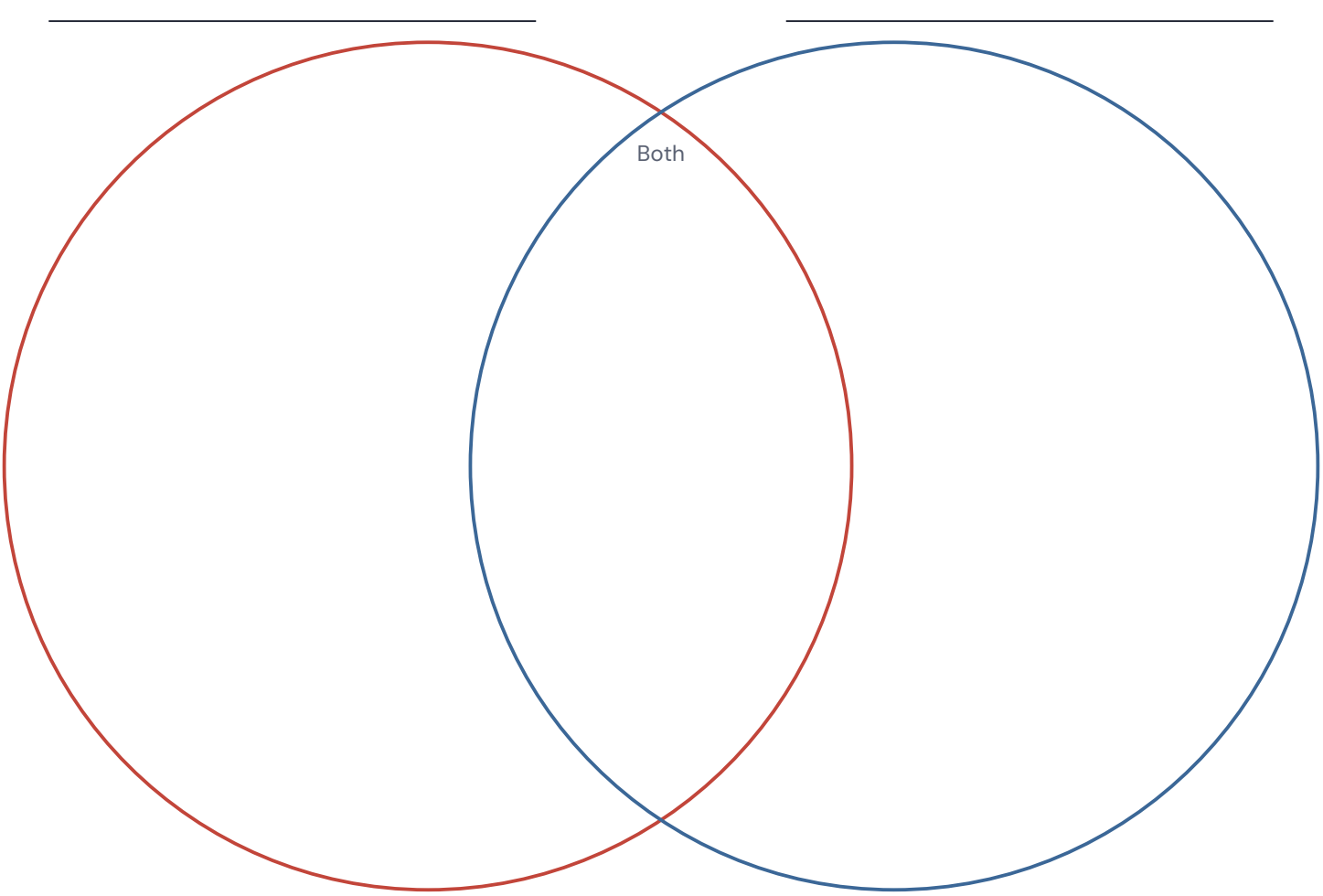
3. **Why does a hummingbird drink so much nectar and sugar water each day?**

4. **A hummingbird cannot walk, but it can fly across the Gulf of Mexico. What does this tell you about how it lives? Use the passage.**

Venn diagram

Write what only one has in its own circle, and what both share where the circles overlap.

Name _____ Date _____



Sum it up

How are they alike, and how are they different?

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Main idea and details

Write the main idea at the top. Under it, write the details that tell more about it or prove it.

Name _____ Date _____

Main idea

What is it mostly about?

Detail 1

Detail 2

Detail 3

In my own words

Put the main idea and the details together in a sentence or two.

Answer key

Choosing Teams

1. What choice did Theo have to make when he became captain?
   Whether to pick his best friend, Felix, or Hamid, the new boy, first.

2. Theo remembered "how hot his face had felt" on his first day. What does this phrase tell you about how he felt, and which words help you tell?
   He felt embarrassed. The clues are that nobody had known his name and he had been picked last for kickball.

3. Why did Theo pick Hamid first?
   He remembered being new and picked last himself, and Hamid did not know anybody. He also knew Felix would get picked anyway.

4. Do you think Theo was still a good friend to Felix? Why or why not?
   Sample answer: yes, because he knew Felix would be picked anyway, and he explained his reason honestly. Felix understood and even invited Hamid to their lunch table.

Answer key

Jamal's Recital Diary

1. What was Jamal worried about in his first diary entry?
   Playing "Morning Song" from memory in front of the whole audience at the piano recital.

2. At the recital, Jamal writes that his "mind went blank for a second." What does this mean, and which words help you tell?
   For a moment he could not think of anything or remember the song. The clue is that he had to look at his hands before he could start to play.

3. What did Jamal do when he hit a wrong note, and why?
   He kept playing to the end, because he remembered Ms. Okafor's advice: "Keep going, and nobody will notice."

4. How did Jamal change from his first diary entry to his last? Use details from the diary.
   Sample answer: at first he was so nervous his hands got sweaty. By the end he asked for a longer, harder song, because he had learned to practice the hard part slowly and to keep going after a mistake.

Answer key

The Case of the Missing Socks

1. What problem did the Novak family have?
   Their socks kept disappearing.

2. Wes wrote "Suspects" at the top of a page. What is a suspect, and which words help you tell?
   Someone or something that might have done it, here the sock thief. The clues are "solve the case" and that the washing machine and Petra are each called a suspect before Wes checks them.

3. In what order did Wes check his suspects, and who turned out to be taking the socks?
   First the washing machine, then his sister, Petra. Then he followed Biscuit, the new puppy, who had a nest of socks behind the dryer.

4. Why do you think Mom bought Biscuit a squeaky toy shaped like a sock?
   Sample answer: so Biscuit would have her own sock-like toy to carry around and would stop taking the family's real socks.

Answer key

The Dog by the Fountain

1. What choice did Ines have to make after she found the dog?
   Whether to keep the dog secretly in her bedroom, or to try to find its owner.

2. Pepper "slipped out of the gate." What does "slipped out" mean, and which words help you tell?
   Got out quietly without anyone noticing. The clue is that it happened "while he was getting the mail," so Mr. Haddad was not watching.

3. Why did Ines decide that the dog probably had an owner?
   Its fur was neat and brushed, so someone was taking good care of it.

4. Do you think Ines made a good choice? Give a reason from the story.
   Sample answer: yes. Pepper was happy to see Mr. Haddad again, and because Ines was honest, she got to walk Pepper every Saturday, which was almost like having a dog of her own.

Answer key

Wolves Return to Yellowstone

1. How many wolves were released in Yellowstone from 1995 to 1997, and where did they come from?
   41 wild wolves, from Canada and northwest Montana.

2. What does “habitat” mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?
   The wild places where an animal lives. The words right after it, “the wild places where they lived,” explain it.

3. What happens, in order, after wolves kill an elk?
   Ravens and magpies arrive almost right away. Coyotes come soon after and wait until the wolves are full. Bears try to chase the wolves away. Many other animals eat what is left.

4. Do you think bringing wolves back helped other animals in Yellowstone? Give a reason from the passage.
   Sample answer: yes. When wolves kill an elk, ravens, magpies, coyotes, bears, eagles and smaller creatures all get food from it.

Answer key

How a Tsunami Travels

1. What is the most common way a tsunami starts?
   With a large earthquake below or near the ocean floor.

2. Out in the deep ocean, tsunami waves are “barely noticeable.” What does this mean, and which words help you tell?
   They are very hard to see or notice. The clue is that the waves are “rarely more than three feet high.”

3. How is a tsunami in the deep ocean different from a tsunami in shallow water near land?
   In the deep ocean it moves over 500 mph and its waves are rarely more than three feet high. Near land it slows to about 20 or 30 mph and grows taller.

4. Why do you think people on a beach should move to high ground as soon as they feel an earthquake, without waiting for more signs?
   Sample answer: an earthquake can start a tsunami, and the waves can arrive fast as a flood or a wall of water, so there may not be time to wait.

Answer key

How a Glacier Is Born

1. Where is a glacier born?
   High in the mountains, where the only precipitation is snow and the snow does not melt away each year.

2. What does “calving” mean, and which words help you tell?
   Blocks of ice breaking loose from a glacier and crashing into the sea. The words just before “which is called calving” describe it.

3. Tell in order how snowflakes become a glacier.
   Snowflakes pile up into a deep snowpack. Its weight presses the flakes into round grains of ice, then solid ice. When the ice is too heavy for the dip to hold, it flows downhill and becomes a glacier.

4. Why do you think icebergs pop and sizzle as they melt? Use the passage.
   Sample answer: air was trapped between the snowflakes and frozen into the ice long ago, so when the ice melts, the air escapes with a pop.

Answer key

The International Space Station

1. What two things is the space station?
   A home where astronauts and cosmonauts live, and a science laboratory.

2. What does “module” mean, and which words help you tell?
   One part of a spacecraft that is designed to do a particular task. The next sentence explains it, and Unity is another part that was attached.

3. Tell in order how the station was built and when people moved in.
   Zarya was launched in November 1998. About two weeks later, Endeavour brought Unity, and the crew attached it to Zarya. The first crew arrived on Nov. 2, 2000, and construction was completed in 2011.

4. Would you like to live on the space station for a few months? Give a reason from the passage.
   Sample answer: yes, because I could circle Earth every 90 minutes and help with research that could not be done anywhere else. But it might feel crowded, with a whole crew sharing two bathrooms.

Answer key

How Bats Find Food in the Dark

1. What do bats use to find insects in the dark?
   Echolocation: they listen for the echoes of their own calls.

2. What does “pinpoint” mean in the passage, and which words help you tell?
   To find the exact spot of something. The words “the exact location of its prey” help you tell.

3. What happens, in order, during a feeding buzz?
   The bat detects an insect, makes a rapid series of calls to pinpoint its exact location, and then swoops in and gulps it down.

4. Why do you think farmers might be glad to have bats living nearby?
   Sample answer: bats eat huge numbers of insects every night, so fewer pests damage the crops, and farmers do not have to spend as much on pesticides.

Answer key

The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird

1. How can you tell a male ruby-throated hummingbird from a female?
   The male has a brilliant red throat, and the female's throat is white.

2. What does "breeds" mean in the first paragraph, and which words help you tell?
   Has its young. The words right after it, "or has its young," tell you.

3. Why does a hummingbird drink so much nectar and sugar water each day?
   Because flying burns so much energy.

4. A hummingbird cannot walk, but it can fly across the Gulf of Mexico. What does this tell you about how it lives? Use the passage.
   Sample answer: it does almost everything by flying. It even feeds while hovering at a flower, so it needs strong wings much more than strong feet.