What Is a Cell?

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

Name _____ Date _____

Cells are the building blocks of all living things. Your body is made of trillions of them. Cells give your body its structure. They take in nutrients from food and turn them into energy, and they can make copies of themselves.

A cell has many parts, and each part has its own job. The nucleus is the cell's command center. It tells the cell when to grow, when to divide and when to die. It also holds the cell's DNA, the instructions passed on from parents to children.

Around the nucleus is the cytoplasm, a fluid like jelly. Tiny parts called mitochondria turn the energy in food into a form the cell can use. Ribosomes make proteins. Lysosomes are the cell's recycling center: they break down worn-out parts and any bacteria that get in.

The outside of the cell is a thin lining called the cell membrane. It keeps the cell apart from what is around it, but it lets materials come in and go out.

1. **What is the cell's command center?**

2. **Which part of a cell makes proteins?**

3. **Why are lysosomes called the cell's recycling center?**

4. **Some cells need a lot of energy for their work. Which part do you think they have many of, and why?**

Answer key

What Is a Cell?

1. What is the cell's command center?
   The nucleus.

2. Which part of a cell makes proteins?
   The ribosomes.

3. Why are lysosomes called the cell's recycling center?
   They break down worn-out parts of the cell, and bacteria that get in.

4. Some cells need a lot of energy for their work. Which part do you think they have many of, and why?
   Sample answer: mitochondria, because they turn the energy in food into a form the cell can use.