From Egg to Chick

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

Name _____ Date _____

A chicken egg holds everything a chick needs to grow. If there is a rooster in the flock, a tiny embryo is already inside when the hen lays the egg. But it does not grow yet. It waits until the egg is kept warm, by a hen sitting on it or in an incubator.

Once the egg is warm, the embryo grows fast, and the yolk feeds it the whole time. Its heart starts to beat on day 2. By day 7 it has a hard tip on its beak, called an egg tooth. By day 12 soft down covers its body.

By day 14 the embryo has turned so its head points toward the air space inside the shell. On day 20 it breaks into the air space and starts to breathe with its lungs. Then it uses its egg tooth to break through the shell and cut around it.

On day 21 the chick pushes itself out. Hatching is hard work, so the first thing it does is rest. Soon its down dries, and it can get up and move about.

1. **On what day does the embryo's heart start to beat?**

2. **What does the chick use to break through the shell?**

3. **Why does the embryo not start to grow as soon as the egg is laid?**

4. **A hen lays one egg a day for a week, then sits on all of them. Why do you think the chicks can all hatch on the same day?**

Answer key

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1. On what day does the embryo's heart start to beat?
   Day 2.

2. What does the chick use to break through the shell?
   Its egg tooth, a hard tip on its beak.

3. Why does the embryo not start to grow as soon as the egg is laid?
   It waits until the egg is kept warm, by a sitting hen or in an incubator.

4. A hen lays one egg a day for a week, then sits on all of them. Why do you think the chicks can all hatch on the same day?
   Sample answer: the embryos wait without growing until the hen starts to sit, so they all start growing together and all take the same 21 days.