

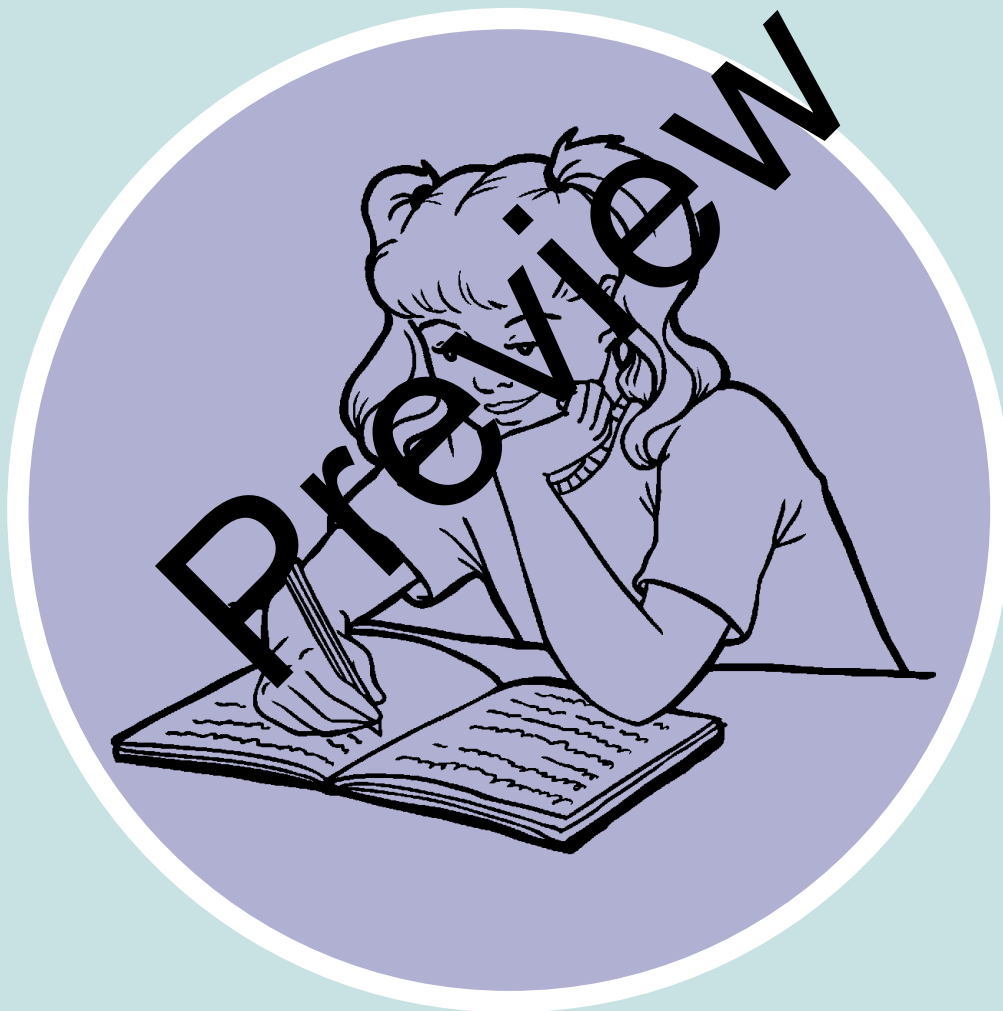


mini
e-book



English

Comprehension



For Upper Primary

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Preview

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Author: Jodie Schicker Illustrator: Alison Mutton

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Read the letter from a concerned parent below, then complete the following activity page.

To the Principal,

I am writing this letter as a very concerned parent because I believe that the school spends too much time participating in sporting activities. My child is expected to participate in sport or fitness every day, but I believe that education is far too important to be constantly interrupted by sport. You need to ban sport at the school because it is disadvantaging students in many ways.

Firstly, children only attend school between 9am and 3pm each week day and I believe that this time should be spent learning more important things than how to play sport. Students should be reading, writing and improving their mathematical skills during school hours, but instead they are losing time in these areas because of hours wasted playing sport. Good literacy and numeracy skills are necessary to ensure that children can secure good jobs when they are older. Sport will not help them secure jobs, so it is a misuse of precious learning time.

Secondly, children already have plenty of time to play sport during recess and lunchtime. If they enjoy sport then they should be playing it after school and on the weekends. There are many sports clubs which offer weekend sport and more people would join them if they didn't spend so much time during school time playing sport.

Furthermore, my child does not even like playing sport so why should she have to spend so much crucial learning time doing sports? Many children are not very good at physical activities and it is very bad for their self-esteem when they are forced to join in. For example, last year my daughter cried for half an hour after her running race because she came last. Why does she need to be put in such an embarrassing situation, when she is at school to learn how to read, not how to run fast?

Some people might say that children should do sport because it is good for their health but this is not always true. What about all of the injuries that are suffered because of sport? Also, when it is really hot, being forced outside to play sport could lead to children becoming overheated or sun burnt which could even lead to skin cancer. I certainly don't want my daughter to be running around outside in freezing temperatures catching a cold instead of learning how to spell.

For all of these reasons, I urge you as the Principal to do something about the ridiculous amount of time that is being wasted on sport in your school. You should be able to see how much it is negatively affecting our children's learning. It is your job to make sure that children get the best education possible and the only way to ensure this is by banning sport.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Katy Duncan

After reading the letter from the concerned parent on page 3, complete the questions and activities below.

1. When does Mrs Duncan think children should play sport?

2. Mrs Duncan claims that children should not participate in sport because of what three health related reasons?

3. Summarise the main arguments given in this letter.

Argument 1 _____

Argument 2 _____

Argument 3 _____

Argument 4 _____

4. Write down five different pronouns used in the letter.

5. Decide whether you agree or disagree with Mrs Duncan. Give one reason for your decision.

6. Tick whether the following statements that appear in the letter are fact or opinion.

i. *Playing sport in the sun always causes skin cancer.* FACT OPINION

ii. *Children can play sport on the weekends.* FACT OPINION

iii. *Children who play sport sometimes suffer injuries.* FACT OPINION

iv. *Reading is more important than sport.* FACT OPINION

7. Match the synonyms on the right to the emotive words used in the text.

ridiculous

essential

waste

stop

precious

outrageous

ban

important

necessary

squander



CHALLENGE...

- On the back of this sheet write another paragraph to add to Mrs Duncan's letter using this statement, 'The money used to buy expensive sports equipment should be used to buy books and computers.'
- In your exercise books design an A5-sized advertisement to encourage children to join a sporting club of your choice. Use persuasive language and an attractive layout.

Read this text by I.M. Greedy (Manager of Ivan's CD shop), then complete the activity page which follows.

Concerts are frequently held by singers and pop groups in most major cities. The cost of purchasing concert tickets can be very expensive with the price per ticket usually well over a hundred dollars. Many teenagers use their limited money to purchase concert tickets when they should be buying CDs instead. CDs are a far better choice for many reasons: they are cheaper, last longer and are portable. Teenagers must reconsider their wasteful spending on concerts.

Firstly, for the price of one concert ticket, teenagers could purchase more than three CDs. In addition, they can keep these CDs forever, whereas concerts are short-lived. If you desperately love a particular singer or group as some teenagers claim to, then wouldn't you rather buy all of their albums instead of attending just one of their concerts? Teenagers usually only have a small amount of money so it is ridiculous for them to be spending so much of it on expensive concert tickets.

Also, when teenagers listen to a CD they are able to control the volume of the music. At concerts the music is incredibly loud and can even affect their hearing. Many people complain that they are unable to hear properly for a few hours after being at a concert. If teenagers love a particular song then they can replay it over and over again on a CD but at a concert it cannot be guaranteed that they will even get to hear their favourite song which is extremely disappointing! It is far more sensible for teenagers to buy a CD and listen to their favourite music at a volume that they enjoy for hours or even years, than attend a short concert.

Furthermore, CDs are portable as they can be taken anywhere. Concerts, on the other hand, are held in large stadiums and literally thousands of tickets are sold. Imagine paying over a hundred dollars for a ticket and then barely even being able to see the stage! Who wants to pay to look at the back of someone else's head even if the music is good? Surely most teenagers would prefer to listen to their favourite music whenever and wherever they wish on a CD rather than being squashed into an arena with thousands of other people.

Some teenagers might argue that the experience of seeing a singer or group perform is worth paying the price of a ticket. However, they should consider whether they are actually getting a true live performance. Don't they realise how many major 'stars' just lip-synch to pre-recorded music? It is outrageous that people can pay over a hundred dollars for a ticket to watch someone move their lips in time to a CD. It would be cheaper to just buy a DVD of the concert instead!

Clearly, buying CDs is a far better choice for teenagers than buying concert tickets. They are far less expensive, more convenient and portable and can be used again and again. Teenagers who unwisely decide to buy concert tickets are wasting their money.



After reading the persuasive text on page 5, complete the questions and activities below.



1. What does the author believe teenagers should spend their money on?

2. Identify two reasons that the author gives for concert tickets being a waste of money.

3. What are two advantages of CDs described by the author?

4. Summarise the main arguments given in this text.

Argument 1 _____

Argument 2 _____

Argument 3 _____

Argument 4 _____

5. What are the two most commonly used pronouns in this text?

6. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the author. Give one reason for your decision.

7. Persuasive texts often use generalisations to strengthen their viewpoint. Decide whether the following statements from the text are fact or generalisation.

Many major stars lip-synch at concerts.

FACT GENERALISATION

Most concerts are held in large stadiums.

FACT GENERALISATION

You can barely see the stage at concerts.

FACT GENERALISATION

Loud music can affect your hearing sometimes.

FACT GENERALISATION

You can keep CDs forever.

FACT GENERALISATION

Teenagers usually only have a small amount of money.

FACT GENERALISATION

Concert tickets are expensive.

FACT GENERALISATION

CHALLENGE...

- In persuasive texts, rhetorical questions can be used to engage and persuade the reader. List the three rhetorical questions used by the author of this text on the back of this page.
- Use your exercise book to design a poster advertising a concert for your favourite singer or group. Try to use persuasive language and advertising features that will encourage people to buy the tickets.

Read the explanatory text below, then complete the activity page which follows.

Skateboarding is a sport that has existed since the early 1900s. Skateboards were once very basic. Roller skates were attached to planks of wood to make them. Today skateboarding has developed into a high profile, extreme sport.

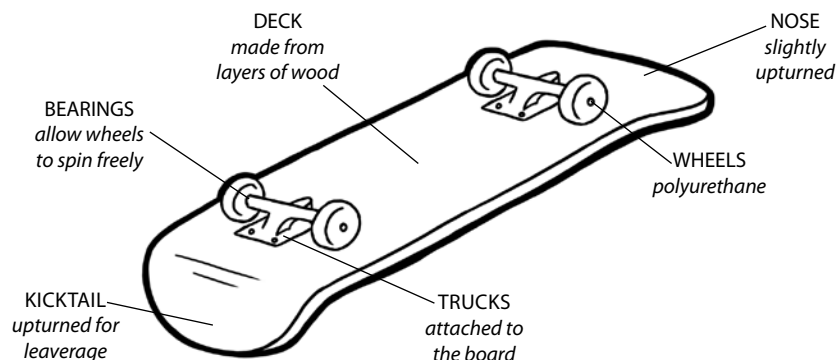
In the late 1950s Californian surfers experimented with skateboarding by securing roller skate wheels to surf boards, and 'surfing the streets' became a new phenomenon. However, skateboarding really grew in popularity when the first professional skateboards were manufactured in 1963. These early skateboards were quite dangerous with baked clay wheels and little grip, leading to many accidents and even a few deaths, and as a result by the mid-1960s the sport of skateboarding began to decline.

Eventually, in 1973 a smooth plastic known as polyurethane was utilised to make skateboard wheels. These plastic wheels provided greater skateboard control and safety. An upturned back end, known as a kicktail was added to the back of the board and this allowed users to invent new tricks. These new design features resulted in the return of skateboarding.

During the 1970s and 1980s many changes were made to the basic skateboard design including the shape, length and width of the board and wheels. Skateboarding developed into two distinctive main styles known as street and ramp skating. Street skating uses urban obstacles such as stairs, hand rails and kerbs for tricks while ramp skating uses shaped ramps and inclines to perform tricks.

Modern skateboard makers now use the latest materials and technology to produce greater speed, stability and versatility. Modern skateboards have six main components: a kicktail, nose, deck, wheels, trucks and bearings. Each of these components can be changed or adapted to suit the boards use for either street or ramp skating.

Skateboarding has developed over time to become a world-wide sport with many competitions offering high prize money and lucrative sponsorship deals. It also remains a popular pastime for many children in Australia and around the world.



After reading the text on Page 7, complete the questions and activities below.

1. When did skateboarding begin?

2. Why did Californians call skateboarding 'surfing in the streets'?

3. What is polyurethane and how did it change skateboarding?

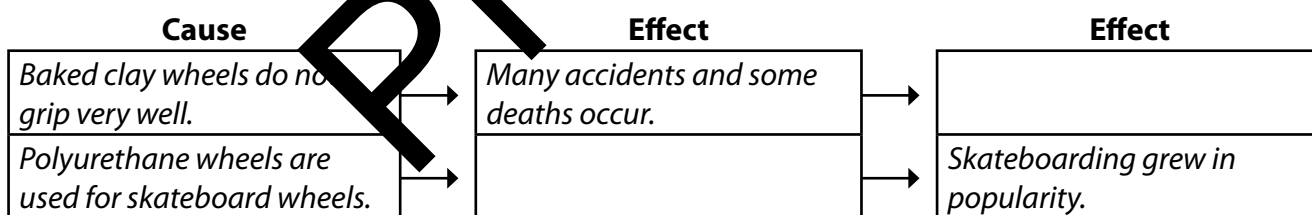
4. In what year were the first professional skateboards manufactured?

5. How does a 'kicktail' change the way that a skateboard is used?

6. Explain the difference between the two main types of skateboarding.

7. Which part of the skateboard allows the wheels to spin better?

8. Complete the cause and effect chart.



9. Find antonyms to match the words from the text.

a. *incline* _____

d. *early* _____

b. *dangerous* _____

e. *greater* _____

c. *many* _____

f. *stable* _____

10. Give three examples of subject-specific vocabulary that has been used in the text.

CHALLENGE...

- On a blank piece of paper draw the outline of a deck and design your own skateboard graphics to go on the deck.
- On the back of this sheet draw a timeline to show how skateboarding has changed and developed.

Read the explanatory text below, then complete the activity page which follows.

Volcanoes come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They can be as simple as a crack in the ground from which magma flows or large mountain-like structures that have built up over time from layers of rock and ash. Volcanoes are responsible for many of the earth's landscape features. They have built mountain ranges, created new islands and devastated entire cities.

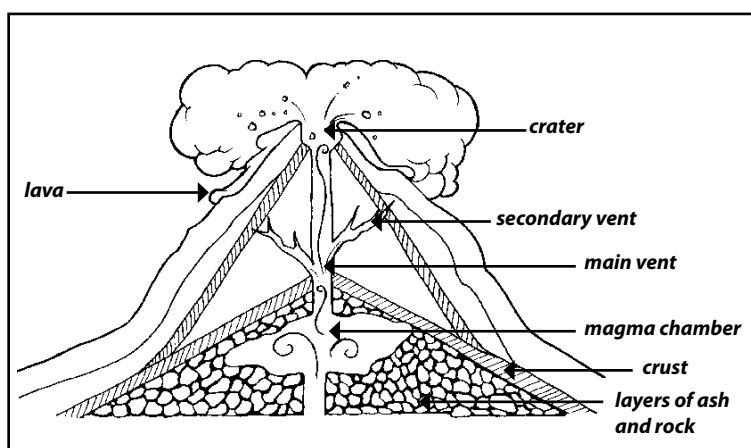
While there are many different types of volcanoes, all have several main features. Deep inside the earth that lies below volcanoes is a magma chamber which contains a pool of liquid which has formed from melted rock known as magma. When pressure below the earth builds, this magma is forced up the centre of the volcano through the main vent and erupts through the hole at the top of the volcano, known as a crater. Magma may also erupt from smaller secondary vents in a volcano. Once the magma reaches the surface it is called lava. The force of the eruption can cause the lava to break into billions of tiny pieces creating ash, dust and rocks of many sizes. The lava may also flow for long distances as a liquid before it cools and solidifies.

Volcanoes can be classified in three ways. Volcanoes are considered active if they have erupted lava, released gas or have shown seismic activity in the past few thousand years. Volcanoes that have stopped erupting but could erupt again are considered dormant. Extinct volcanoes are those that have been dormant for more than 10,000 years.

The word volcano derives from the name of the God of Fire in Roman mythology known as Vulcan, so it is not surprising that many people associate volcanoes most with the hot lava that they create. However, so dangerous can be the poisonous gases and ash released by an erupting volcano, these can lead to suffocation and death. The ash released from a volcano can also affect the climate when it is carried to the upper atmosphere. The ash creates a blanket which limits the amount of sunlight reaching the Earth, resulting in lower temperatures.

The study of volcanoes is known as vulcanology. By measuring tremors, pressure within the earth and the build up of gases, vulcanologists can often predict volcanic activity with accuracy and use warning systems to avoid loss of life.

Despite their danger and intensity, people remain intrigued by the force of nature that is a volcano and visiting volcanoes has even become a tourist attraction in some areas such as New Zealand and Hawaii.



After reading the text on page 9, complete the questions and activities below.

1. What is magma called once it reaches the surface? _____

2. Where does the word volcano derive from?

3. Describe how vulcanologists predict volcanic activity.

4. What is the study of volcanoes called?

5. Match the volcano classifications to the correct descriptions.

EXTINCT

Has stopped erupting but may erupt again.

DORMANT

Has erupted or shown activity in past 2,000 years.

ACTIVE

Has been dormant for more than 10,000 years.

6. Complete the cause and effect chart.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Pressure builds below the earth's surface.	
Eruptions can be very forceful.	
Poisonous gases and ash are released.	
Ash is released into the upper atmosphere.	

7. Give three examples of subject-specific vocabulary used in this text.

8. Find antonyms to match the words from the text.

a. *liquid* _____

d. *smaller* _____

b. *simple* _____

e. *below* _____

c. *upper* _____

f. *many* _____

CHALLENGE ...

- Use an atlas to locate five volcanoes and list their names and locations on the back of this sheet.



Read the report below, then complete the activity page which follows.

General Classification

The Redback spider is a highly venomous creature from the arachnid group of animals. It is an invertebrate, meaning it has no backbone. The scientific name for it is *Latrodectus hasselti*.

Appearance

Like all spiders, Redbacks have eight legs, spinnerets, hard plates to protect their bodies and two main body segments. The first segment is formed by the head and chest and is known as the cephalothorax and the second is the abdomen. They also have many eyes and jaws with two fangs. Both the male and female species of the Redback have black heads, abdomens and legs. The female spider is much larger in size, growing to 10-14 millimetres with a red stripe or marking across the abdomen. The male spider is smaller at only four millimetres and it has a plain, black abdomen without any red markings.

Habitat

Redback spiders are found in all areas of Australia and they prefer to live in dry, dark places. They are often located around buildings, among piles of wood and beneath peeling bark and in dry leaf litter.

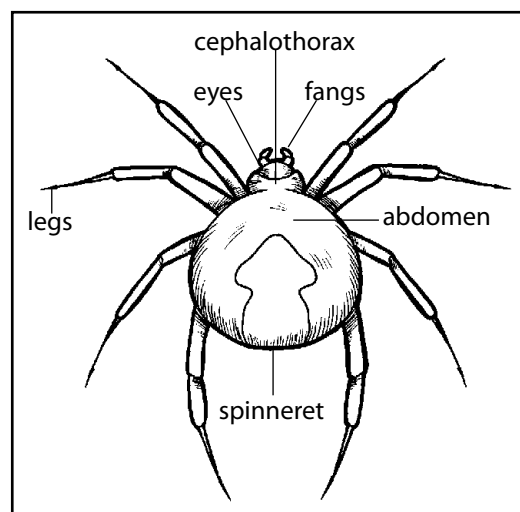
Diet

Redback spiders eat a variety of invertebrates including insects, slaters and cicadas. They have even been known to kill and eat small snakes. Redbacks use their untidy webs to catch their prey in the sticky threads before biting and using their deadly venom to kill it. Sometimes the spider will wrap the prey in a silky parcel to eat later. A female Redback spider can survive without food for up to three months.

Daddy-long-legs and White-tailed spiders are predators of adult Redback spiders and they use their toxic venom to kill them. Wasps also lay their eggs within Redback spider egg sacs and the hatching wasp grubs eat the Redback spider eggs before they can hatch. Tiny Redback hatchling spiders are called spiderlings and they can also be prey for many birds, insects and other spiders. Female Redback spiders have a lifespan of between two and three years, while male Redback spiders only live between six and seven months.

Concluding Statement

Redback spiders have long been feared by humans because their bite can cause nausea, vomiting, perspiration, muscle weakness and even death. However, they are not usually aggressive and rarely leave their webs, making a bite unlikely. In 1956 an anti-venom was developed, preventing many deaths.



Read the report on Redback spiders on page 11. Complete the questions and activities below.

1. What is the scientific name of the Redback spider? _____

2. Name the two main body segments.

3. Describe the habitat of the Redback spider.

4. What is the diet of the Redback spider?

5. Complete the retrieval chart to show the differences between male and female Redback spiders.

	Size	Markings	Lifespan
Male			
Female			

6. Write a simple question to match each of the following answers.

Question: _____

Answer: Up to three months.

Question: _____

Answer: Spiderlings.

Question: _____

Answer: 1956.

Question: _____

Answer: No backbone.

7. List three symptoms of a Redback spider bite.

★ _____ ★ _____ ★ _____

8. Name three predators of Redback spiders.

★ _____ ★ _____ ★ _____

9. Underline the verbs in the sentences below about the Redback spider.

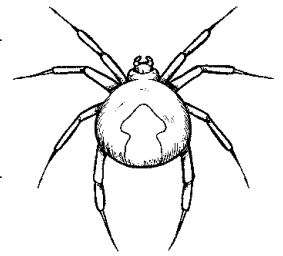
Redback spiders eat a variety of invertebrates.

They use their untidy webs to catch their prey.

Sometimes the spider will wrap the prey in a silky parcel.

They bite their prey and inject their deadly venom.

CHALLENGE ... List five different invertebrates not mentioned in the text on the back of this sheet.



Read the report below, then complete the activity page which follows.

Classification

The Venus Flytrap, or *Dionea muscipula* as it is known scientifically, is a carnivorous plant that traps and eats insects within its leaves.

Habitat

Venus Flytraps are native to a very small area of North America. They grow in damp, marshy areas where soil quality is poor. In the past, Venus Flytraps were of such interest to people in their small native area of North and South Carolina, that they were picked and put at risk of becoming endangered. However, they are now grown in green houses from seeds all over the world and are common in many garden centres and nurseries.

Diet

It is because they cannot absorb enough nutrients from their soil and environment that Venus Flytraps absorb nutrients from their prey when digesting them. They use special chemicals called enzymes to dissolve the bodies of the insects that are caught in their strong jaw-like leaves and then exude the nitrogen and other needed nutrients from them.

Most carnivorous plants use strong smells or colours to attract their prey and Venus Flytraps are no different. They use a sugary liquid substance to draw flies and insects towards them. They wait with their leaves open and upward for their prey. Once an insect lands on their sensitive hairs which cover their inner leaves, the plants will snap shut in less than half a second. Venus Flytraps' leaves close like jaws and trap their prey with their sharp spines interlocking to prevent insects from escaping. It can take between five to twelve days for Venus Flytraps to digest an insect and their leaves will remain closed while they are digesting. The outer shell or exoskeleton of an insect is not digested and this is blown away by the wind or washed away by the rain once the leaves re-open. Each leaf can only catch and digest an insect three times before it begins to go black and dies.

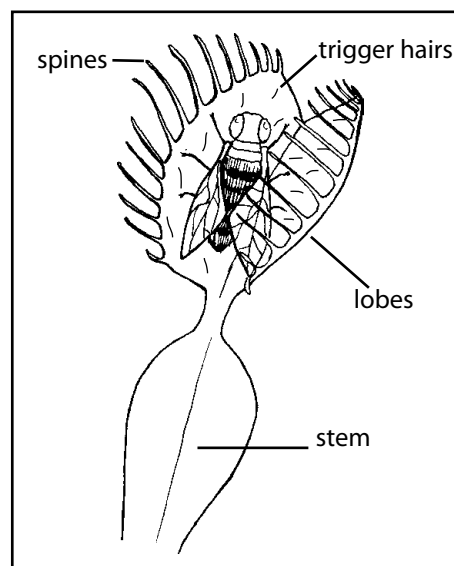
Many people make the mistake of thinking that they can feed their Venus Flytrap regular meat, but this type of fatty meat is too difficult for the plant to digest and can cause a Venus Flytrap to die.

Appearance

Venus Flytraps can grow up to 30 centimetres tall and generally live for several years in the wild. They have green outer leaves and reddish-pink or green inner leaves. A Venus Flytrap has two hinged, claw-like leaves called lobes which are covered in sharp spines. Each of the leaves is covered in small, sensitive hairs.

Concluding Statement

Venus Flytraps have long been a source of fascination to people because of their ability to move quickly and because of the unusual way that they trap and eat their insect prey.



Read the report on page 12 and then complete the questions and activities below.

1. What is the scientific name of the Venus Flytrap?

2. Why are people so interested in the Venus Flytrap?

3. Why is a Venus Flytrap carnivorous?

4. Find three adjectives to describe the leaves of the Venus Flytrap.

★ _____ ★ _____ ★ _____

5. Match the words with their meanings.

carnivore

eats plants only

omnivore

eats animal meat

herbivore

eat animal meat and plants

6. Read each statement carefully and circle T or F.

Venus Flytraps absorb nitrogen from their prey.

T/F

The leaves of a Venus Flytrap can close in less than a second.

T/F

The only prey of the Venus Flytrap is flies.

T/F

Venus Flytraps eat any type of meat.

T/F

The leaves of a Venus Flytrap will die when they have caught too many insects.

T/F

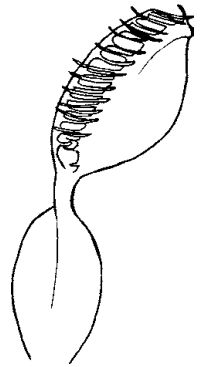
7. How does a Venus Flytrap dispose of the unwanted exoskeleton of its prey?

8. Provide definitions of the subject-specific words below.

exudes	
enzymes	
digest	
endangered	

CHALLENGE ...

Research three animals that are: a) carnivores b) herbivores c) omnivores. Record the information on the back of this sheet.



Answers

Page 4

1. Recess, lunchtime, after school and on weekends.
2. Injuries, overheating, sunburn, skin cancer, colds.
3. A1 - Learning time is being wasted on sport. A2 - There is plenty of time for sport outside of school. A3 - Sport is bad for children's self-esteem. A4 - Sport is not always good for your health.
4. I, my, you, they, them, she, their, her, your.
6. a) opinion b) fact c) fact d) opinion.
7. Outrageous, squander, important, stop, essential.

Page 6

1. CDs
2. Any two from: cost, not being able to see, being squashed, volume, lip-synching.
3. Any two from: cheaper, can control volume, portable, listen to them again and again, can replay songs, last forever.
4. A1 - CDs are cheaper and last longer. A2 - The loudness of CDs can be changed. A3 - CDs can be listened to anywhere. A4 - Most singers lip-synch.
5. They, their.
7. Because he owns a CD shop.
8. Generalisation, generalisation, generalisation, fact, fact, fact, generalisation.
9. Wouldn't you rather buy all their albums instead of listening to them for just one night? Who wants to pay to look at the back of someone else's head even if the music is good? Don't they realise how many major so-'stars' just lip-synch to pre-recorded music?

Page 8

1. The early 1900s.
2. It started with roller skate wheels on surfboards.
3. A smooth plastic gave greater control and safety.
4. 1963.
5. Skateboarders could invent new tricks.
6. Street uses the urban environment, but ramp uses purpose built ramps and inclines.
7. Bearings.
8. Popularity of skateboarding declines, skateboards become safer.
9. a) decline b) safe c) few d) late e) lesser f) unstable.

Page 10

1. Lava.
2. Vulcan - name of God of Fire in Roman mythology.
3. Measuring tremors, pressure in earth and seismic activity.
4. Vulcanology.
5. Extinct - have been dormant for more than 10,000 years. Dormant - have stopped erupting but may erupt again. Active - have erupted or shown activity in past 2,000 years.
6. a) Magma is forced through the main vent. b) Lava breaks into tiny pieces creating ash, dust and rocks. c) Suffocation and death. d) Sunlight is reduced and cooler temperatures occur.
8. a) solid b) bigger c) complex d) above e) lower f) few

Page 12

1. Latrodectus hasselti.
2. Cephalothorax, abdomen.
3. They live in all areas of Australia. Dry, dark places, around buildings, wood, beneath peeling bark, dry leaf litter.
4. Variety of invertebrates including slaters, insects, cicadas and also small skinks.
5. Male - 4 mm, no markings, 6-7 months. Female - 10-14mm, red stripe, 2-3 years.
6. a) How long can the Redback survive without food?
b) What are newly hatched spiders called?
c) When was an anti-venom developed?
d) What does invertebrate mean?
7. Any three of: nausea, vomiting, perspiration, muscle weakness, death.
8. Any three of: Daddy-long-legs, White-tailed spider, grubs, birds, insects, other spiders.
9. a) eat b) catch c) wrap d) bite

Page 14

1. Dionea muscipula.
2. Because they move quickly and because of the unusual way they trap and eat prey.
3. Because they do not get enough nutrients from the soil.
4. Jaw-like, hinged, claw-like, green, reddish-pink, spiny, hairy.
5. Carnivore - eats animal meat, omnivore - eats animal meat and plants, herbivore - eats plants only.
6. a) true b) true c) false d) false e) true.
7. It washes away in rain or blows away in wind.