

Active Reading

Section 2: How Species Interact with Each Other

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

An organism that lives in or on another organism and feeds on the other organism is a *parasite*. The organism the parasite takes its nourishment from is known as the *host*. The relationship between the parasite and its host is called **parasitism**. Examples of para-sites are ticks, fleas, tapeworms, heartworms, blood sucking leeches, and mistletoe.

Photos of parasites may make you feel uneasy, because parasites are somewhat like predators. The differences between a parasite and a predator are that a parasite spends some of its life in or on the host, and that a parasite does not usually kill its host. In fact, the parasite has an evolutionary advantage if it allows its host to live longer. However, the host is often weakened by or exposed to disease from the parasite.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main idea of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

1. Give four examples of parasites.

2. What does a parasite get from its host?

3. What is the relationship between a parasite and its host called?

In the space provided, write the letter of the term or phrase that best completes each statement or best answers each question.

- _____ 4. A parasite
- a. takes nourishment from another organism.
 - b. always eventually kills its host.
 - c. cannot live in mistletoe.
 - d. All of the above

- _____ 5. A host
- a. is like a predator.
 - b. is the organism a parasite lives on or in.
 - c. may make you feel uneasy.
 - d. usually kills its parasite.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

6. The prefix *para-* means “alongside,” while the Greek word *sitos* means “grain” or “food.” Use this information to define *parasite*.

7. If the suffix *-ism* means “the practice of,” how would you define parasitism?

RECOGNIZING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

One reading skill is the ability to recognize similarities and differences between two phrases, ideas, or things. This is sometimes known as comparing and contrasting.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

8. How are parasites and predators alike?

9. How are parasites and predators different?

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

10. Why is it beneficial for a parasite to allow its host to live?

11. What effect does a parasite’s presence usually have on its host?
