Name:_____

The Spotted Gardener

If you see a tiny, red dome with black spots crawling on a leaf, you've found a ladybug! Even though we call them "bugs," scientists actually call them lady beetles. These colorful insects are famous for their bright shells and their helpful nature, but there is much more to them than just being cute.

A Changing Life

Ladybugs go through a total transformation called metamorphosis. A mother ladybug lays tiny yellow eggs on the underside of a leaf. When they hatch, the larvae look like tiny, black alligators! They eat and grow quickly, eventually forming a hard case called a pupa. Inside the pupa, the ladybug's body changes completely. Finally, the adult beetle crawls out, ready to fly.

Tiny Protectors

Farmers and gardeners love ladybugs because they are natural pest-fighters. Their favorite food is the aphid. Aphids are very small insects that suck the juice out of plants, which can make the plants sick or even die. One hungry ladybug can eat up to 5,000 aphids in its lifetime! Because they protect our food and flowers, ladybugs are often called "the gardener's best friend."

Ladybug eating aphids

Colorful Warnings

Why are ladybugs so bright? In nature, bright colors often act as a warning. Birds and other predators know that bright red or orange usually means an insect tastes terrible. If a bird tries to eat a ladybug, the beetle can release a smelly, yellow fluid from its leg joints. This "reflex bleeding" tells the predator, "I'm not a yummy snack!"

1. Based on the passage, what is the effect of a ladybug having bright red or orange colors?

A. It helps them find other ladybugs in the green grass.

B. It makes it easier for them to hide from hungry birds.

C. It keeps them warm during the cold winter months.

D. It warns predators that they will taste bad.

2. How does the author organize the information in the section "A Changing Life"?

A. By comparing ladybugs to mealworms.

B. By describing the steps of a ladybug's growth in order.

C. By explaining the problem of aphids and how to solve it.

D. By listing different facts about where ladybugs live.

3. This is a two-part question. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A: What can you infer about the relationship between farmers and ladybugs?

A. Farmers find ladybugs to be a nuisance in their fields.

B. Farmers believe ladybugs are the most beautiful insects.

C. Farmers are happy to see ladybugs on their crops.

D. Farmers try to keep ladybugs away from their aphid plants.

Part B: Which detail from the text best supports your answer to Part A?

A. "Scientists actually call them lady beetles."

B. "The beetle can release a smelly, yellow fluid."

C. "One hungry ladybug can eat up to 5,000 aphids."

D. "Ladybugs are often called 'the gardener's best friend.'"

4. Why did the author include the information about "reflex bleeding"?

A. To explain how ladybugs travel from one garden to another.

B. To show how ladybugs find and eat their favorite food.

C. To describe how metamorphosis changes an insect's body.

D. To explain how ladybugs protect themselves from being eaten.