lab earthworm dissection answers

Understanding the Earthworm Dissection Lab: A Comprehensive Guide

lab earthworm dissection answers are crucial for students and educators seeking to fully comprehend the anatomy and physiology of these vital invertebrates. This comprehensive guide delves deep into the common questions and key learning objectives associated with a typical earthworm dissection lab. We will explore the external features, internal organ systems, and the functional significance of each structure. Understanding the purpose behind each step of the dissection process and being able to correctly identify and label the various parts is essential for a successful learning experience. This article aims to provide clear, accurate, and detailed information to help solidify understanding, serving as a valuable resource for anyone preparing for or reviewing their earthworm dissection.

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Introduction to Earthworm Anatomy

Earthworms, belonging to the phylum Annelida, are segmented worms renowned for their crucial role in soil aeration and nutrient cycling. A lab earthworm dissection provides an invaluable hands-on opportunity to study their complex yet elegant biological design. Understanding earthworm anatomy is a foundational step in comprehending invertebrate physiology and evolutionary adaptations. These creatures possess a bilateral symmetry and a coelomate

body plan, featuring distinct organ systems that perform essential life functions. The dissection process allows for direct observation of these systems, fostering a deeper appreciation for the intricate workings of a living organism. This guide will break down the key components, offering insights into what students typically need to identify and understand during their lab sessions.

External Anatomy of the Earthworm

Before delving into the internal structures, a thorough examination of the earthworm's external features is essential. The body is distinctly segmented, a hallmark of annelids. Each segment, except for the first and last, is adorned with tiny bristles called setae, which aid in locomotion by providing traction. The anterior end of the worm is characterized by the prostomium, a fleshy lobe extending forward over the mouth. This region is sensitive to light and vibrations. The posterior end tapers to the anus, the external opening of the digestive tract. A prominent band, the clitellum, is usually visible in mature earthworms, appearing as a thickened, saddle-like structure. This segment plays a vital role in reproduction.

Key External Features to Identify

- Segments
- Setae
- Prostomium
- Mouth
- Anus
- Clitellum
- Dorsal Blood Vessel (visible as a dark line on the dorsal surface)

Internal Anatomy of the Earthworm: Organ Systems

The internal organization of an earthworm reveals a sophisticated arrangement of organ systems designed for efficient functioning. The coelom, a fluid-filled body cavity, separates the digestive tract from the body wall, allowing for greater flexibility and facilitating the movement of internal organs. Dissection aims to reveal these systems in their anatomical context. Understanding the relationships between different organs is as important as identifying them individually. This section will detail the major internal systems encountered during a typical lab earthworm dissection, providing the answers students often seek.

Digestive System Exploration

The earthworm's digestive system is a complete, one-way tract running from the mouth to the anus, adapted for processing organic matter in the soil. Each part of the digestive tract has a specialized function in breaking down food and absorbing nutrients. Identifying these components is a primary objective of the dissection. The mouth leads to the buccal cavity, followed by the pharynx, which has salivary glands associated with it. Food then moves into the esophagus, which passes through the pharynx and into the crop, a thin-walled storage organ. Following the crop is the gizzard, a muscular structure that grinds food. The intestine, a long, folded tube, is where digestion and absorption primarily occur, and it terminates at the anus.

Key Digestive System Structures

- Mouth
- Pharynx
- Esophagus
- Crop
- Gizzard
- Intestine
- Anus

Circulatory System Identification

Earthworms possess a closed circulatory system, meaning blood is always contained within vessels. A prominent feature is the dorsal blood vessel, which carries blood anteriorly, and a ventral blood vessel that carries blood posteriorly. Connecting these two are five pairs of aortic arches, often referred to as "hearts." These arches pump blood from the dorsal vessel to the ventral vessel. While visualizing individual capillaries is challenging in a dissection, understanding the path of blood flow through these major vessels is crucial. The color of the blood is typically a pale red or greenish-yellow, depending on the species.

Major Circulatory Components

- Dorsal Blood Vessel
- Ventral Blood Vessel
- Aortic Arches (Hearts)

Nervous System and Excretory System

The nervous system of an earthworm is relatively simple but effective. It consists of a cerebral ganglia (brain) located in the anterior end, which is connected to a ventral nerve cord that runs the length of the body. Segmental ganglia along the ventral nerve cord coordinate responses to stimuli. For the excretory system, earthworms possess nephridia, which are paired excretory organs found in most segments. Each nephridium filters waste products from the coelomic fluid and blood and excretes them through a pore on the body surface. Identifying these structures can be more challenging but is important for a complete understanding.

Components of the Nervous and Excretory Systems

- Cerebral Ganglia (Brain)
- Ventral Nerve Cord
- Segmental Ganglia
- Nephridia

Reproductive System Observations

Earthworms are hermaphroditic, meaning each individual possesses both male and female reproductive organs. The male organs include testes, which produce sperm, and seminal vesicles, which store sperm. The female organs include ovaries, which produce eggs. During mating, sperm is exchanged between two earthworms and stored in receptacles called seminal receptacles. Fertilization occurs externally within a cocoon secreted by the clitellum. Observing the location and appearance of these reproductive structures is a key aspect of the dissection.

Reproductive Organs

- Testes
- Seminal Vesicles
- Ovaries
- Seminal Receptacles

Earthworm Dissection Procedure and Best Practices

A successful earthworm dissection requires careful planning and execution. Typically, the specimen is pinned to a dissecting tray, dorsal side up. A longitudinal incision is made along the dorsal midline, starting from the anterior end, to expose the internal organs. Care must be taken not to cut too deeply, which could damage delicate structures. Using dissecting pins to hold the body wall open is crucial for clear visualization. Forceps and dissecting needles are the primary tools used to carefully tease apart tissues and identify organs. Maintaining a moist environment for the specimen is also important to prevent desiccation.

Steps for an Effective Dissection

- Secure the earthworm to the dissecting tray.
- Make a midline dorsal incision.
- Carefully pin open the body wall.
- Use forceps and probes to identify organs.
- Keep the specimen moist throughout the procedure.

Common Earthworm Dissection Questions and Answers

Students often encounter specific questions during their lab earthworm dissection. One common query is identifying the "hearts." These are not true hearts in the mammalian sense but are muscular aortic arches that pump blood. Another frequent question involves distinguishing the crop from the gizzard; the crop is thin-walled and used for storage, while the gizzard is muscular and used for grinding. Understanding the difference between the dorsal and ventral blood vessels, and their respective roles in blood circulation, is also a key learning point. Furthermore, recognizing that the clitellum is a reproductive structure, not an external marking of age, is important.

Frequently Asked Questions

- What are the "hearts" of an earthworm?
- How can I differentiate between the crop and the gizzard?
- What is the function of the setae?
- Where is the brain located?

Significance of Earthworm Dissection in Biological Studies

The earthworm dissection lab serves as a fundamental learning experience in biology. It introduces students to basic anatomical terminology, the principles of organ system organization, and the importance of observational skills. By dissecting an earthworm, students gain a concrete understanding of invertebrate anatomy, which forms the basis for studying more complex organisms. The earthworm's role in its ecosystem also highlights the interconnectedness of life. This practical application of biological knowledge reinforces theoretical concepts learned in the classroom and fosters a deeper appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the natural world.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main external features to observe during an earthworm dissection?

During an earthworm dissection, key external features to observe include the prostomium (a fleshy lobe extending from the anterior end), the peristomium (the first segment surrounding the mouth), the clitellum (a thickened band of segments involved in reproduction, typically appearing later in the worm's life), and segmentation visible along the body.

How do you identify the dorsal and ventral sides of an earthworm?

The dorsal side of an earthworm is typically darker and has a prominent, dark dorsal blood vessel running along its length. The ventral side is usually lighter and contains the external openings of the male genital pores, which are often located on specific segments (usually segments 15-17, depending on the species).

What is the primary function of the earthworm's clitellum?

The clitellum is a glandular structure that secretes a mucus ring. This mucus aids in reproduction by holding the earthworms together during mating and forms a cocoon to protect the developing eggs after fertilization.

What internal structures are most commonly identified during a basic earthworm dissection?

Commonly identified internal structures include the digestive tract (mouth, pharynx, esophagus, crop, gizzard, intestine, anus), the circulatory system

(dorsal blood vessel, aortic arches or 'hearts'), the reproductive organs (seminal vesicles, oviducts, sperm receptacles or spermathecae), and the excretory system (nephridia).

Why is the crop and gizzard important in the earthworm's digestive system?

The crop and gizzard are specialized parts of the earthworm's digestive tract that work together to process food. The crop is a thin-walled storage sac that temporarily holds ingested food, while the gizzard is a muscular, thick-walled organ that grinds food into smaller particles, similar to how a bird's gizzard functions.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to lab earthworm dissection answers, each with a short description:

- 1. Annelid Anatomy: A Comprehensive Dissection Guide
 This foundational text delves into the intricate internal and external
 structures of earthworms and other annelids. It provides detailed step-bystep instructions for dissection, alongside clear diagrams and explanations
 of organ systems. The book is an essential resource for students and
 educators seeking a thorough understanding of annelid biology and morphology.
- 2. Earthworm Essentials: Practical Dissection and Identification
 Designed for introductory biology courses, this book focuses on the core
 anatomical features of common earthworm species. It offers practical tips for
 performing a clean and effective dissection, highlighting key structures
 relevant to understanding their physiology. Readers will find straightforward
 explanations and helpful visual aids to confirm their findings.
- 3. The Dissected Earthworm: Decoding Its Internal Landscape
 This title offers a more analytical approach to earthworm dissection, going beyond simple identification to explore the functional significance of each organ. It connects anatomical structures to the worm's ecological role and life processes. The book is ideal for students who want to understand why the earthworm is built the way it is.
- 4. Lab Manual for Invertebrate Zoology: Earthworm Focus
 A classic lab manual format, this book is tailored for hands-on learning
 experiences. It includes pre-lab questions, post-lab analysis, and specific
 prompts to guide students through their earthworm dissection. The manual
 emphasizes accurate observation and recording of anatomical details crucial
 for a successful lab report.
- 5. Understanding Earthworm Anatomy: A Visual Journey
 This book prioritizes high-quality illustrations and photographs to demystify
 the earthworm's anatomy. It presents complex structures in an accessible
 visual format, making it easier to identify and label during a dissection.
 The narrative complements the visuals by explaining the purpose and location
 of each part.
- 6. Earthworm Dissection: From Specimen to Solution
 This title positions the dissection as a problem-solving exercise, guiding students to identify and understand potential variations or challenges they might encounter. It offers common dissection pitfalls and how to overcome

them, ensuring students can confidently interpret their findings. The book aims to build confidence in the dissection process and its resulting data.

- 7. Invertebrate Explorations: The Earthworm Case Study
 As a dedicated case study, this book uses the earthworm dissection as a
 springboard to discuss broader principles of invertebrate biology. It
 highlights comparative anatomy within the annelid phylum and the evolutionary
 significance of their features. Students will gain a deeper appreciation for
 the earthworm's place in the animal kingdom.
- 8. The Art of Earthworm Dissection: Precision and Accuracy in the Lab This book emphasizes the methodical and precise nature of scientific dissection. It offers advanced techniques for preparing and dissecting earthworms to reveal delicate structures clearly. The focus is on developing skillful techniques for accurate observation, essential for advanced biological studies.
- 9. Earthworm Dissection Answers: A Student's Companion Guide
 This resource acts as a direct companion to the earthworm dissection lab
 experience. It provides clear, concise answers to common questions students
 have during dissection, along with verified labels for anatomical diagrams.
 The book serves as a quick reference to confirm identifications and solidify
 understanding of the worm's biology.

Lab Earthworm Dissection Answers

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Lab Earthworm Dissection Answers

Ebook Title: Unraveling the Earthworm: A Comprehensive Guide to Dissection and Anatomy

Ebook Outline:

Introduction: The Importance of Earthworm Dissection in Biology Education

Chapter 1: Pre-Dissection Preparations: Gathering materials, ethical considerations, and safety precautions.

Chapter 2: External Anatomy: Identifying key external features and their functions.

Chapter 3: Internal Anatomy: Step-by-step dissection guide with detailed explanations of organ systems.

Chapter 4: Physiological Processes: Exploring the earthworm's digestive, circulatory, nervous, and reproductive systems.

Chapter 5: Post-Dissection Procedures: Proper disposal of materials and cleaning up.

Chapter 6: Beyond the Dissection: Further exploration of earthworm biology and ecology.

Conclusion: Recap of key findings and future learning opportunities.

Appendix: Glossary of terms and additional resources.

Unraveling the Earthworm: A Comprehensive Guide to Dissection and Anatomy

Introduction: The Importance of Earthworm Dissection in Biology Education

Earthworm dissection is a cornerstone of introductory biology education. This seemingly simple exercise offers a powerful hands-on learning experience, providing students with a tangible understanding of fundamental biological principles. Dissecting an earthworm allows students to move beyond theoretical concepts and engage directly with the intricacies of a living organism's anatomy and physiology. Beyond the practical skill development, the activity fosters critical thinking, observation skills, and a deeper appreciation for the complexity of even the simplest life forms. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the earthworm dissection process, from preparation to post-dissection cleanup, ensuring a safe, effective, and enriching educational experience. Understanding the earthworm's anatomy provides a solid foundation for understanding more complex organisms, highlighting the interconnectedness of life on Earth. The simplicity of the earthworm's structure makes it an ideal model organism for studying fundamental biological processes.

Chapter 1: Pre-Dissection Preparations: Setting the Stage for Success

Before beginning the dissection, meticulous preparation is crucial for a successful and safe experience. This involves gathering the necessary materials and ensuring a clean, organized workspace. Ethical considerations are paramount; obtaining earthworms ethically, often through responsible suppliers or environmentally conscious collection methods, is essential. Understanding the life cycle and ecological role of earthworms is a crucial aspect of ethical engagement with this exercise.

Essential Materials:

Dissecting tray
Dissecting pins
Scalpel or dissecting scissors
Forceps
Probe
Magnifying glass

Dissecting microscope (optional)
Earthworm (preferably anesthetized)
Paper towels
Gloves (for hygiene and safety)
Dissection guide (this ebook!)

Safety Precautions:

Always handle the scalpel and scissors with extreme care.

Avoid cutting towards yourself or others.

Wear gloves to protect against potential pathogens.

Dispose of used materials responsibly following local guidelines.

Ensure proper ventilation in the workspace.

dorsal surface is typically darker in color.

Ethical Considerations:

Source earthworms responsibly. Avoid harming the earthworm population in your environment. Anesthetize the earthworm before dissection to minimize suffering. Common methods include chilling the worm or using a mild anesthetic solution (always follow ethical guidelines and consult with your instructor).

Treat the earthworm with respect, acknowledging its role in the ecosystem.

Chapter 2: External Anatomy: A First Look at the Earthworm

The external anatomy of the earthworm provides a foundation for understanding its internal structures and functions. Careful observation reveals key features that indicate its adaptation to its burrowing lifestyle. Students should take time to meticulously examine the following external features:

Anterior and Posterior Ends: Identify the head (anterior) and tail (posterior) regions. The anterior end is slightly tapered, while the posterior end is blunt.

Segments: Note the distinct segmentation of the body, which is a defining characteristic of annelids. Each segment is separated by grooves.

Clitellum: Locate the clitellum, a thickened band of segments involved in reproduction. Its location varies depending on the species and maturity of the earthworm.

Setae (Bristles): Observe the small, hair-like setae on each segment. These bristles aid in locomotion and grip within the soil. Using a magnifying glass will enhance this observation.

Mouth and Anus: Identify the mouth at the anterior end and the anus at the posterior end. Dorsal and Ventral Sides: Distinguish between the dorsal (top) and ventral (bottom) surfaces. The

Chapter 3: Internal Anatomy: Unveiling the Inner Workings

This chapter provides a step-by-step guide to dissecting the earthworm and identifying its internal organs. The process should be slow and methodical, allowing for careful observation and identification.

Step-by-Step Dissection:

- 1. Pinning: Secure the earthworm to the dissecting tray, ventral side up, using dissecting pins.
- 2. Initial Incision: Make a shallow incision along the midline of the ventral surface, extending from the clitellum to the posterior end.
- 3. Careful Separation: Carefully separate the body wall using forceps and a probe. Avoid damaging internal organs.
- 4. Organ Identification: Identify the following organs:

Digestive System: Esophagus, crop, gizzard, intestine. Observe the pathway of food through the system.

Circulatory System: Dorsal and ventral blood vessels, hearts (aortic arches). Note the closed circulatory system.

Nervous System: Ventral nerve cord, ganglia. Trace the nerve cord along the length of the body. Reproductive System: Locate the seminal vesicles, ovaries (in females), and testes (in males), depending on the earthworm's sex.

5. Detailed Examination: Use a magnifying glass or dissecting microscope to examine the finer details of each organ system.

Chapter 4: Physiological Processes: Understanding the Earthworm's Function

Understanding the earthworm's physiology requires analyzing how its various organ systems work together to maintain life.

Digestion: The earthworm ingests soil, extracting organic matter. The crop stores food, and the gizzard grinds it. The intestine absorbs nutrients.

Circulation: The closed circulatory system efficiently transports oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. The dorsal and ventral blood vessels work in tandem, and the aortic arches act as hearts.

Respiration: Earthworms breathe through their moist skin. Gas exchange occurs directly across the body surface.

Nervous System: The ventral nerve cord coordinates movement and responses to stimuli. The ganglia act as simple brains.

Reproduction: Earthworms are hermaphrodites, possessing both male and female reproductive organs. They reproduce through cross-fertilization.

Chapter 5: Post-Dissection Procedures: Responsible Cleanup and **Disposal**

After the dissection, proper cleanup and disposal of materials is crucial for hygiene and environmental responsibility. All used materials, including the earthworm, should be disposed of according to your institution's guidelines or local regulations. The dissecting tray and instruments should be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized. Proper disposal prevents the spread of potential pathogens and ensures a safe environment for future work.

Chapter 6: Beyond the Dissection: Further Exploration

The earthworm dissection serves as a springboard for further exploration of earthworm biology and ecology. Students can research topics such as:

The ecological role of earthworms in soil health and nutrient cycling.

The diversity of earthworm species and their adaptations to different environments.

The use of earthworms in composting and waste management.

The impact of pollution and habitat loss on earthworm populations.

Conclusion: A Journey of Discovery

Earthworm dissection is more than just a lab exercise; it's a journey of discovery. It allows for a tangible understanding of biological principles and fosters a deeper appreciation for the complexity and interconnectedness of life. This guide has provided a comprehensive framework for a successful and enriching dissection experience. Remember to approach this activity with respect, curiosity, and a commitment to responsible scientific practice.

FAOs:

- 1. Why is earthworm dissection important? It provides hands-on experience in understanding basic anatomy and physiology.
- 2. How do I ethically obtain earthworms? Source them from reputable suppliers or collect them responsibly, ensuring minimal environmental impact.
- 3. What safety precautions should I take? Handle sharp instruments carefully, wear gloves, and dispose of materials properly.
- 4. What are the key external features of an earthworm? Segments, clitellum, setae, anterior/posterior ends, mouth, and anus.
- 5. How do I identify the internal organs? Follow the step-by-step dissection guide provided.
- 6. How does the earthworm's circulatory system work? It's a closed system with dorsal and ventral vessels and aortic arches (hearts).
- 7. How does an earthworm breathe? Through its moist skin.
- 8. How do I properly dispose of materials after dissection? Follow your institution's or local

guidelines.

9. What are some resources for further learning about earthworms? Consult textbooks, online databases, and scientific journals.

Related Articles:

- 1. Earthworm Anatomy: A Detailed Guide: Covers in detail the internal and external anatomy of different earthworm species.
- 2. The Ecological Role of Earthworms: Explores the importance of earthworms in soil health and nutrient cycling.
- 3. Earthworm Reproduction and Life Cycle: Explains the reproductive strategies and life cycle stages of earthworms.
- 4. Dissecting Other Invertebrates: Compares and contrasts earthworm dissection with other invertebrate dissections.
- 5. Microscopic Anatomy of Earthworms: Examines the cellular structures and tissues of the earthworm using microscopy.
- 6. Earthworms and Soil Conservation: Discusses the role of earthworms in preventing soil erosion and promoting healthy soil ecosystems.
- 7. The Effects of Pollution on Earthworm Populations: Investigates the impact of environmental pollution on earthworm survival and biodiversity.
- 8. Earthworm Taxonomy and Classification: Explores the various species of earthworms and their phylogenetic relationships.
- 9. Using Earthworms in Composting: Explains how earthworms can be effectively utilized in composting processes.

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Matthew Distefano, 2011-09-15 Homework Helpers: Biology is a user-friendly review book that will make any student—or those trying to help them—feel like he or she has a private Biology tutor. The book covers all of the topics included in a typical one-year Biology curriculum, including: An approach to the study of biology using the scientific method and the skills and equipment used by most biologists. The concept of the cell as the unit of structure and function of all life. DNA and the chemical processes of inheritance. The evolution of life on this planet and how humans are part of the process. The study of the environments of life and how all life is interconnected on this planet. Each chapter includes detailed questions that allow students to assess how well they've mastered each idea. Not only does the author provide the right answers to these self-study questions, but also detailed explanations of why the wrong answers are wrong.

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Skinner has to say, but even those who disagree most will find this a stimulating book." —Samuel M. Strong, The American Journal of Sociology "This is a remarkable book—remarkable in that it presents a strong, consistent, and all but exhaustive case for a natural science of human behavior...It ought to be...valuable for those whose preferences lie with, as well as those whose preferences stand against, a behavioristic approach to human activity." —Harry Prosch, Ethics

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System 10 Respiratory System 11. Circulatory System Nervous System 13. Receptor Organs 14 Endocrine System 15 Urinogenital System 16 Embryology Some Comparative Charts of Protochordates 17 Some Comparative Charts of Vertebrate Animal Types 18 Index.

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lab earthworm dissection answers: A Framework for K-12 Science Education National Research Council, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Board on Science Education, Committee on a Conceptual Framework for New K-12 Science Education Standards, 2012-02-28 Science, engineering, and technology permeate nearly every facet of modern life and hold the key to solving many of humanity's most pressing current and future challenges. The United States' position in the global economy is declining, in part because U.S. workers lack fundamental knowledge in these fields. To address the critical issues of U.S. competitiveness and to better prepare the workforce, A Framework for K-12 Science Education proposes a new approach to K-12 science education that will capture students' interest and provide them with the necessary foundational knowledge in the field. A Framework for K-12 Science Education outlines a broad set of expectations for students in science and engineering in grades K-12. These expectations will inform the development of new standards for K-12 science education and, subsequently, revisions to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development for educators. This book identifies three dimensions that convey the core ideas and practices around which science and

engineering education in these grades should be built. These three dimensions are: crosscutting concepts that unify the study of science through their common application across science and engineering; scientific and engineering practices; and disciplinary core ideas in the physical sciences, life sciences, and earth and space sciences and for engineering, technology, and the applications of science. The overarching goal is for all high school graduates to have sufficient knowledge of science and engineering to engage in public discussions on science-related issues, be careful consumers of scientific and technical information, and enter the careers of their choice. A Framework for K-12 Science Education is the first step in a process that can inform state-level decisions and achieve a research-grounded basis for improving science instruction and learning across the country. The book will guide standards developers, teachers, curriculum designers, assessment developers, state and district science administrators, and educators who teach science in informal environments.

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readers will relish the concept of individual taste as they guess what each different animal calls lunch. Who won't be hungry to read this one again?

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moving day arrives, Martin fills a small glass jar with river water as a keepsake. And when he returns to the stream, he discovers that his connection to nature can be just as wondrous in the city. This poetic story looks at the special relationship between an imaginative child and the natural world, and explores how that connection can be nurtured and recreated in a new place. Key Text Features dialogue illustrations vignettes Correlates to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts). CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

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