

READING COMPREHENSION 3

Read the following text and **complete** the activities below.

The world's most extreme animals

There are some animals that can survive almost anything – they can be frozen solid or boiled alive and yet still do not die! We asked some scientists to talk about their favourites.

The Himalayan jumping spider

'This small spider is able to live at amazingly high altitudes (up to 6,700 metres); it can survive on the highest slopes of Mount Everest, one of the most hostile environments to life. It is possibly the highest-dwelling creature on Earth. It feeds on insects, such as the springtail, which live lower down and get blown up the mountainside. (1) ___ Its legs are also extremely powerful, enabling the spider to jump big distances.'

The Arctic woolly bear caterpillar

'Some animals can survive being frozen solid, including several types of frog and many insects. (2) ___ The Arctic woolly bear caterpillar spends 5% of its time eating (during June only) and 5% in a cocoon. The cocoon protects the caterpillar from being eaten by predators, and also conserves energy which will be needed later on to synthesize essential compounds to combat the extreme cold. This unusual creature spends the remaining 90% of its life frozen. It hibernates in temperatures as low as -70° C, and even allows its blood to freeze.'

The Sahara desert ant

'This ant comes out from its underground burrow at the hottest point in the day, when temperatures are around 60°C. It is able to figure out where it is in relation to the sun, and can thus find its way back to its burrow again. (3) ___ Its main prey are dead insects which have died of the heat. Its long legs enable it to scuttle quickly across the sand, hardly touching it at all – and this protects its body from the extreme heat. It will also climb up plants in order to cool off, whenever it gets the opportunity.'

The Pompeii worm

'This amazing animal was discovered off the coast of the Galapagos Islands around 30 years ago. (4) ___ It lives in hard tubes near hydrothermal vents on the seabed. It sticks its head out of the tube into cooler water to eat and breathe, but its tail rests in water reaching temperatures of 80°C. We don't really know how its tail survives this, but we are doing research into the furry bacterial coating on the worm's back, which may act as insulation.'

The water bear

'Whilst these tiny water-dwelling creatures might look rather humble, they are actually a super-species when it comes to extreme living. They have been found in hot springs, in the mountains of the Himalayas, and under thick sheets of ice. (5) ___ They can survive extremes of radiation, pressure, heat, and cold. They can live without food or water for very long periods of time (up to ten years, in fact). In the lab, these fascinating critters have been subjected to temperatures as low as absolute zero (-273°C). The change in their body composition was observed and recorded as changing from 85% water to only 3%. This deliberate dehydration stops the water bear from being torn apart by the freezing ice.'

1. Read the article again. Five sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–F the ones which fit each gap (1–5). There is one sentence you do not need to use.

- A.** This is very important because it's only possible to survive out in the blisteringly hot sun for a few minutes at a time.
- B.** It has eight eyes, including an incredibly powerful central pair, in order to spot prey from far away.
- C.** If humidity is high, its ability to sweat is impaired and this makes it feel awful.
- D.** One of the most amazing examples is this little creature – which can be found within the Arctic Circle, Greenland, and Canada.
- E.** Scientists have even sent them into outer space!
- F.** It has also been found more recently, in the Pacific Ocean, near Costa Rica.

2. Match the underlined words in the text with the definitions. The noun definitions are given in the singular.

- 1. done on purpose: _____
- 2. an opening that allows air, gas, or liquid to escape: _____
- 3. part of a mountain or hill: _____
- 4. an animal that is hunted or killed for food: _____

