



Name _____ Date _____

SALAMANDERS

Salamanders are slender amphibians with short legs and long tails. Because of their moist skin, salamanders need to live near water or in moist ground. Most salamanders live in a forest habitat. Different species of salamanders need different amounts of water. Some spend their entire time in the water, while others will visit water intermittently.

Salamanders look a lot like lizards except they do not have scales. Most salamanders are small, but some rare species of salamanders can get up to five feet in length. The salamander has a very long tail. If the salamander loses its tail or leg, it will grow back. As the salamander matures, it will shed its skin.

A salamander begins its life as an egg in the water. The egg hatches to form a larva. The larva breathes with gills and swims. As the larva continues to mature, it will form lungs and begin to breathe air. This allows the salamander to live on the land. The salamander never travels far from where it is born because it is so dependent on the water to survive. The salamander is a predator and eats insects, snails, slugs, small fish, and worms.

Because of their moist skin, salamanders must live near water to avoid drying out. Most salamanders are active in the nighttime. This means they are nocturnal animals. On sunny days they will generally hide under logs or other hiding places to avoid the sun. Salamanders are harmless to people. They do not bite, nor do they have poison.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of the word *intermittently* as used in this passage?
 - a. too much
 - b. regularly
 - c. sporadically
 - d. often
2. According to this passage, salamanders need water because of their . . .
 - a. weight.
 - b. habitat.
 - c. mating instincts.
 - d. moist skin.
3. You can conclude that a salamander would probably do well living in . . .
 - a. the Sonoran Desert.
 - b. the high mountain tops.
 - c. dry land with plenty of bushes.
 - d. moist forest land.