DAILY Warm-Up 11

Name _____ Date _____

DESERT TORTOISE

The desert tortoise gets its name because it lives in the desert. This means that the tortoise has to adapt to live in an arid, hot climate. Its habitat can be found in Southern California, Nevada, Arizona, and in parts of Mexico. Just like turtles, the desert tortoise has a shell that is usually brown and tan in color and is very hard. The shell can be anywhere from 8–15 feet long. The tortoise's body is not designed to swim (like a turtle's body is).

You may wonder how the tortoise can survive the extreme heat. The desert tortoise can handle up to 140-degree temperatures by burrowing itself into the ground to escape the heat. The desert tortoise spends most of its life in a burrow. It makes a hissing or a popping sound when it is afraid.

The desert tortoise eats herbs, grasses, and the new growth of cacti. The flowers of the cactus are eaten as well. This animal is more active during the daytime—especially in the early morning and early evening. It can live to be 50–80 years old! That is old for an animal. The tortoise hatches its young from eggs. The temperature actually determines whether it will be a male or female tortoise. The desert tortoise is endangered. Let's do what we can to protect this interesting animal!

STORY QUESTIONS

1. Compared to the turtle, the desert tortoise can . . .
   a. withstand extreme heat.
   b. swim in the water.
   c. grow a hard shell.
   d. hatch their young from eggs.
2. The word *cacti* is the plural form of . . .
   a. extreme temperature.
   b. caterpillar.
   c. cactus.
   d. cactus flowers.
3. Why do you think the shell is so important to the tortoise?
   a. It prevents it from getting wet.
   b. It helps the tortoise move quickly.
   c. It stores food.
   d. It serves as a protection.
4. A synonym for *arid* (which is found in the first paragraph) is . . .
   a. high in the sky.
   b. dry and parched.
   c. protected.
   d. endangered.

LIVEWORKSHEETS