Chapter 1: The Tiny Teacher

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Exercise 1.1 — Comprehension Check (Part 1)

Q1 The story of an ant's life sounds almost untrue. The italicised phrase means (i) highly exaggerated. (ii) too remarkable to be true. (iii) not based on facts.

SOLUTION

The phrase 'sounds almost untrue' means the facts are so surprising and wonderful that they are hard to believe — yet they are real and observed facts, not made-up ones. Option (i) implies dishonest exaggeration, and option (iii) implies the story has no factual basis. Both are wrong because the text says people have watched ants closely and know these facts. Option (ii) best captures the meaning.

Answer: (ii) too remarkable to be true.

Q2 Complete the following sentences. (i) An ant is the smallest, _____. (ii) We know a number of facts about an ant's life because _____.

SOLUTION

The answers come directly from the opening paragraph of the chapter.
(i) The text calls the ant 'the commonest, the smallest but the wisest insect.'
(ii) The text states: 'people have kept ants as pets, and have watched their daily behaviour closely.'

Answer: (i) An ant is the smallest, but the wisest insect. (ii) We know a number of facts about an ant's life because people have kept ants as pets and have watched their daily behaviour closely.

Q3 In what ways is an ant's life peaceful?

SOLUTION

The text gives clear examples of order and discipline in the anthill.
No worker ever tries to live in a soldier's quarters, and no soldier goes out searching for food. Workers, soldiers, and cleaners never harm a grub. Each ant does its own share of work and never fights with other members of the group.

Answer: An ant's life is peaceful because every ant has a fixed role and sticks to it. Workers search for food, soldiers guard, and cleaners clean. No ant tries to do another's job or harms a grub. There is no fighting among ants — each one works intelligently and bravely for the group.

Exercise 1.2 — Comprehension Check (Part 2)

Q1 How long does it take for a grub to become a complete ant?

SOLUTION

According to the text: grubs become cocoons two or three weeks after hatching. Then the cocoons lie without food or activity for three weeks more. After that the cocoons break and perfect ants appear.
Total time = 2–3 weeks (grub stage) + 3 weeks (cocoon stage) = about five to six weeks.

Answer: It takes about five to six weeks. Grubs become cocoons in two or three weeks, then the cocoons break after three more weeks to give complete ants.

Q2 Why do the worker ants carry the grubs about?

SOLUTION

The text says workers 'carry them about daily for airing, exercise and sunshine.' This shows that the grubs need fresh air, warmth, and light to grow well, and workers take this responsibility seriously.

Answer: Worker ants carry the grubs about every day to give them airing, exercise and sunshine. This helps the grubs grow healthy and strong.

Q3 What jobs are new ants trained for?

SOLUTION

The text states: 'New ants learn their duties from old ants as workers, soldiers, builders, cleaners, etc.' The training lasts a few weeks before the young ants go out into the world of work.

Answer: New ants are trained by old ants for jobs such as working, soldiering, building, and cleaning. After a few weeks of training they are ready to go out and work.

Q4 Name some other creatures that live in anthills.

SOLUTION

The text says: 'An anthill is a home not only for ants but also for some other creatures—beetles, lesser breeds of ants and the greenfly.'

Answer: Beetles, lesser breeds of ants, and the greenfly also live in anthills.

Q5 Mention three things we can learn from the 'tiny teacher'. Give reasons for choosing these items.

SOLUTION

The text lists what humans can still learn from ants: 'hard work, sense of duty and discipline, cleanliness, care for the young ones, and, above all, a firm loyalty to the land where they live.' Any three with reasons drawn from the story are acceptable. Below is a model answer using three well-supported choices.

Answer: Three things we can learn from ants are: (1) Hard work — every ant works tirelessly without complaining, showing us that effort brings results. (2) Sense of duty — each ant sticks to its own job and never neglects it, teaching us to be responsible. (3) Care for the young — workers feed, clean, and carry grubs daily, reminding us to look after those who depend on us.

Exercise 1.3 — Discuss

Q1 Discuss the following topics in groups. (i) What problems are you likely to face if you keep ants as pets? (ii) When a group of bees finds nectar, it informs other bees of its location, quantity, etc. through dancing. Can you guess what ants communicate to their fellow ants by touching one another's feelers?

SOLUTION

(i) Keeping ants as pets is tricky — they are tiny and escape easily through the smallest gaps, they live in large colonies so you need a proper ant farm, and they may bite. You must keep their home moist and supply food regularly.
(ii) The chapter says ants use their feelers (antennae) to 'talk' to other ants and that each ant greets others by touching their feelers. By analogy with bees, ants likely communicate things such as: the location of food, whether danger is near, or recognition of nestmates.

Answer: (i) Keeping ants as pets could be difficult because they are very small and escape through tiny gaps. They live in large groups, so you would need a proper enclosure like an ant farm. You would have to provide the right food and moisture, and be careful as some ants bite. (ii) When ants touch feelers they likely share information such as where food is, how much food is available, or whether there is danger nearby — similar to how bees use dancing to communicate.

Exercise 1.4 — Complete the Poem

Q1 Complete the following poem with words from the box below. Then recite the poem.
[Box: hole kennel nests anthill stable]

Soldiers live in barracks
And birds in _____,
Much like a snake that rests
In a _____. No horse is able
To sleep except in a _____.
And a dog lives well,
Mind you, only in a _____.
To say 'hi' to an ant, if you will,
You may have to climb an _____.

SOLUTION

Match each blank to the creature's home using the word box: birds → nests, snake → hole, horse → stable, dog → kennel, ant → anthill.
All five words from the box are used exactly once.

Answer: Soldiers live in barracks
And birds in nests,
Much like a snake that rests
In a hole. No horse is able
To sleep except in a stable.
And a dog lives well,
Mind you, only in a kennel.
To say 'hi' to an ant, if you will,
You may have to climb an anthill.