



Get ready to wiggle into the world of the mealworm! These little creatures are more than just an average bug. They are small, yellow-brown worms that are about one to two inches long. You might think they are slimy like other worms, but they're not! They have a hard outer shell, called an exoskeleton. And guess what? They're not even really worms, but the larval stage of the Darkling Beetle.



Speaking of the Darkling Beetle, let's learn about the life cycle of these tiny wrigglers. It all starts when a female beetle lays hundreds of tiny, white eggs. After just a few days, the eggs hatch into tiny mealworms, which spend their time eating and growing until they're ready to turn into pupae. After a couple of weeks, the pupae transform into adult Darkling Beetles, and the cycle starts all over again!

Now that we know how they grow, let's dive into where you might find these critters and what they munch on. Mealworms are found all over the world and they love to live in dark, damp places like under logs or in your pet's food dish. Their favorite foods are grains, vegetables, and other decaying matter. But don't worry, they're not pests. In fact, they help break down dead plants and animals in the environment.



These little wiggly wonders aren't just interesting for their life cycle and diet, they also have a special relationship with humans and other animals. For humans, they're often used as food for pets like birds, fish, and reptiles, and some scientists are even studying them as a source of food for people! For other animals, they are a tasty snack and a crucial part of the food chain. So, the next time you see a mealworm, remember that they're much more than just a little worm – they're an important part of our world!



Solve each problem.

Use the article to answer the question.

Determine if the statements is something the animal would say (W) or it is not something the animal would say (N).

- 11) "I dislike dark, enclosed spaces."
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Meal Worms

Name: _____

- 15) "I'm large, gray, and have a mushy body."
- 16) "We transform into Darkling Beetles after a few weeks as pupae."
- 17) "My mom can lay hundreds of eggs at a time, that's a lot of brothers and sisters!"
- 18) "I'm actually quite soft and squidgy."
- 19) "I'm quite slimy."
- 20) "I'm a very popular pet."
- 21) "I love sunny, dry environments."
- 22) "You'll usually spot us hanging around in dark, damp places - we just love them!"
- 23) "We start our life as eggs and then turn into tiny worms, which will eventually become beetles."
- 24) "We only spend a few days as an egg. Then we hatch and start eating and growing."
- 25) "Humans often feed us to their pets, because we are a good source of protein."
- 26) "I stay a mealworm forever."
- 27) "Decaying matter might not seem delicious to you, but it's a gourmet meal to us."
- 28) "I may look like a soft slimy worm, but actually I have a hard, dry exoskeleton."

Determine if the statement is a fact or opinion based on the information in the article.

- 29) Grains and vegetables, and other decomposing materials make up the diet of mealworms.
- 30) It would be really cool to keep mealworms as pets.
- 31) Mealworms live in dark, humid places worldwide, such as beneath logs.
- 32) Mealworms may look like caterpillars, but they are much better.
- 33) Mealworms are actually the larval stage of the Darkling Beetle.
- 34) It is amazing to think that mealworms can transform into a completely different creature.
- 35) Mealworms serve as a vital food source for pets like birds, fish, and reptiles.
- 36) Mealworms transform into pupae after growing and eating.
- 37) Darkling Beetles are much more interesting than their larval stage, the Mealworm.
- 38) It's fascinating that mealworms transform into Darkling Beetles.

Determine if the statement is true or false.

- 39) Mealworms have a hard outer shell, called an exoskeleton.
- 40) After hatching, mealworms immediately turn into pupae.
- 41) Darkling Beetles lay hundreds of tiny, white eggs.
- 42) Mealworms start life bright blue before becoming yellowish.
- 43) Mealworms are often used as food for pets like birds or fish.
- 44) Mealworms love to live in dry places.
- 45) Mealworms eventually grow into fireflies or ladybugs depending on their gender.
- 46) Mealworms are considered pests because they destroy crops.
- 47) A favorite foods of mealworms is decaying matter.
- 48) Mealworms are the larval stage of the Darkling Beetle.

Determine which choice is the expanded form of the underlined contraction.

49) Mealworms don't eat during their pupa stage.

- A. does not
- B. do not
- C. are not
- D. will not



Meal Worms

Name: _____

50) These little critters won't harm humans, so there's no need to worry.

- A. will not
- B. do not
- C. cannot
- D. are not

51) Mealworms aren't insects, they're the larvae of darkling beetles.

- A. cannot
- B. are able
- C. will not
- D. are not

52) They're found in dark and damp places like under logs and rocks.

- A. They are
- B. They is
- C. They have
- D. They were

53) Mealworms can't really defend themselves.

- A. are able
- B. will not
- C. cannot
- D. are not

Determine if the sentence is a declarative(d), exclamatory(e), interrogative(i) or imperative(m).

54) It's shocking to realize that meal worms are not worms, but larvae of darkling beetles!

55) Sprinkle a small amount of water on the meal worms every day.

56) What do mealworms like to eat?

57) It's astonishing how meal worms can live up to two years!

58) Mealworms are the larvae of darkling beetles.

59) What interesting facts do you know about meal worms?

60) Mealworms release a foul-smelling odor to deter predators.

61) Where do meal worms live?

62) Birds and reptiles love to snack on mealworms.

63) Feed the meal worms small pieces of fruits and vegetables.

64) Meal worms can eat a variety of things including grains, vegetables, fruits, and even decaying animals!

65) Please handle meal worms gently.



Meal Worms

Name: _____

1. _____ 26. _____ 51. _____

2. _____ 27. _____ 52. _____

3. _____ 28. _____ 53. _____

4. _____ 29. _____ 54. _____

5. _____ 30. _____ 55. _____

6. _____ 31. _____ 56. _____

7. _____ 32. _____ 57. _____

8. _____ 33. _____ 58. _____

9. _____ 34. _____ 59. _____

10. _____ 35. _____ 60. _____

11. _____ 36. _____ 61. _____

12. _____ 37. _____ 62. _____

13. _____ 38. _____ 63. _____

14. _____ 39. _____ 64. _____

15. _____ 40. _____ 65. _____

16. _____ 41. _____

17. _____ 42. _____

18. _____ 43. _____

19. _____ 44. _____

20. _____ 45. _____

21. _____ 46. _____

22. _____ 47. _____

23. _____ 48. _____

24. _____ 49. _____

25. _____ 50. _____



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Meal Worms

Name: **Answer Key**

1.	C	26.	Not	51.	D
2.	C	27.	Would	52.	A
3.	D	28.	Would	53.	C
4.	B	29.	fact	54.	exclamatory
5.	D	30.	opinion	55.	imperative
6.	A	31.	fact	56.	interrogative
7.	C	32.	opinion	57.	exclamatory
8.	B	33.	fact	58.	declarative
9.	B	34.	opinion	59.	interrogative
10.	C	35.	fact	60.	declarative
11.	Not	36.	fact	61.	interrogative
12.	Not	37.	opinion	62.	declarative
13.	Would	38.	opinion	63.	imperative
14.	Would	39.	true	64.	exclamatory
15.	Not	40.	false	65.	imperative
16.	Would	41.	true		
17.	Would	42.	false		
18.	Not	43.	true		
19.	Not	44.	false		
20.	Not	45.	false		
21.	Not	46.	false		
22.	Would	47.	true		
23.	Would	48.	true		
24.	Would	49.	B		
25.	Would	50.	A		



Solve each problem.

Use the article to answer the question.

- 1) Which choice best describes the color of mealworms? (paragraph 1)
A. red
B. yellow
C. dark, damp places
D.
- 2) Where do mealworms like to live? (paragraph 3)
A. In the sand at the beach
B. Dark, damp places
C. one year
D. 6 months
- 3) How long does it take for mealworm pupae to turn into adult Darkling Beetles? (paragraph 2)
A. 6 months
B. a couple of weeks
C. one year
D. Just one
- 4) How many eggs does a female lay? (paragraph 2)
A. Just one
B. C.
D.
- 5) What is the hard outer shell of mealworms called? (paragraph 1)
A. Endoskeleton
B. Shell
C. Exoskeleton
- 6) What is another name for mealworms? (paragraph 1)
A. Darkling Beetle larva
B. C.
D.
- 7) Where might you find a mealworm? (paragraph 3)
A. in caves
B. in the ocean
C. under logs
D.
- 8) How do mealworms benefit the environment? (paragraph 3)
A. They filter dirty water using a special sack in their abdomen
B. They help break down dead plants and animals
C. D.
- 9) What do mealworms like to eat? (paragraph 3)
A. Mice and other rodents
B. Grains, vegetables, and decaying matter
C. D.
- 10) What is one use of mealworms by humans? (paragraph 4)
A. a cheap source of protein
B. a filter for water
C. food for pets
D.

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- 11) "I dislike dark, enclosed spaces." (paragraph 3)



Meal Worms

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12) "I'm considered a pest." (paragraph 3)