

Grade 4 – Assignment for week of (4/20 to 4/24)

Observing how *decomposers* and *consumers* make changes to our *Terrariums* :

Our terrariums are now (4) weeks old. We started our small ecosystem using soil, plants, litter, seeds, and water. We have added earthworms as our decomposers, and snails as our consumers.

This week we will look closely at *how* and *why* our small ecosystem is *changing*.

Science Vocabulary Words-

Land Snail:	Slow-moving land animal with a shell; a type of consumer
Mouth:	Opening found on the underside of the head for eating
Radula:	Tongue-like organ in mouth with thousands of tiny teeth
Decomposer:	Organism that breaks down nutrients and puts them back into the soil
Consumer:	Organism that eats other living things
Herbivore:	Consumer that eats only plants or other producers

Task #1:

Choose (3) of the science vocabulary words, and create word art. Word art is where you use drawing to make a picture of the vocabulary word that shows what the word means.

See below an example for the vocabulary word **snail**:



Task #2: Observing changes caused by **Decomposers** and **Consumers**-
Study the pictures of your terrarium and answer the following questions:

Picture #1



Picture #2



Picture #3



Picture #4



In **picture #2**, our earthworm is tunneling through the soil? How does this help the soil and plants?

Compare **picture #3** and **picture #1**. What has changed? Why?

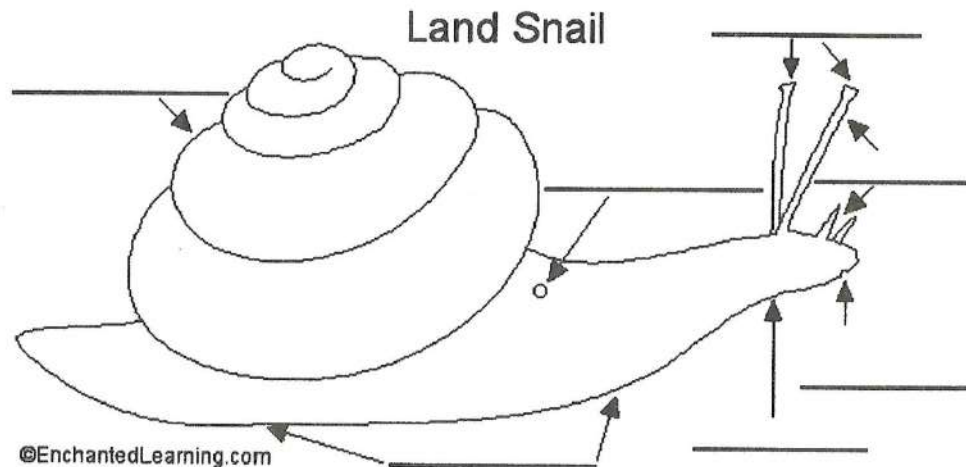
In **picture #4**, what behavior is the snail showing? What is its job in the food chain?

Looking closely at **picture #4**, and your vocabulary to tell what body parts it uses to eat the grass?

Task #3: Reviewing the anatomy, or body parts, of the land snail

Read the definitions, then label the land snail diagram below.

eyespot - located at the tips of the long tentacles on land snails	mouth - on the underside of the head - it contains the radula, a file-like tongue that breaks down the snail's food
foot - the soft, muscular part of the snail that allows the snail to move	respiratory pore - a small hole in the side of the body, used for breathing
shell - the hard, spiral, protective covering of the snail	tentacles - two long and two short sensory tentacles on the upper surface of the snail's head
head - the front part of the snail, containing the tentacles, eyes, and mouth	



Task #4: Reading to Learn about Snails

Read the (2) page story entitled, "A Snail's Journey." When you are done reading, share with a parent or guardian or think to yourself what you learned about snails in the story.

When you are finished sharing or thinking about the story, answer the following questions.

1. What kind of home was the snail looking for?
2. What (2) things helped the snail travel or move across the ground?
3. What did the snail eat as it was traveling along its journey?
4. How did the snail protect itself from the raccoon?
5. How did the snail know when it was finally home?



A SNAIL'S JOURNEY

The snail wanted to find a new home. It needed a home where there were cool, damp places to hide. The new home also had to have leaves and plants for the snail to eat.

The snail set out on a cool spring morning, before the sun was up. The grass was damp with dew. The snail moved by using the muscular "foot" on its belly. As it crawled along the ground, the snail left a trail of slimy mucus. The mucus helped the snail slide over the ground.



As the snail crawled, the sun slowly rose in the sky. Suddenly a bird swooped down. Quickly the snail pulled its body inside its hard shell. It sensed the bird's beak banging against the top of its shell, but the bird could not break the shell. The bird soon flew away. When all was safe, the snail poked its head and foot out of its shell and continued its journey.

Soon the sun grew warmer, and the grass began to dry and get hot. The snail could not stay out in such conditions. If it did, its body would dry up, and it would die.

The snail crawled toward a shady spot under a tree. It found some mushrooms growing where the ground was cool

and damp. The snail settled under a mushroom, pulled its body into its shell, and rested.

When the snail poked its head out of its shell again, it was dark and the air was cool. The snail crawled along until it found some leaves. Then it began to rub its tongue across the leaves. Thousands of sharp teeth on its tongue ripped up bits of the leaves for the snail to swallow.

The snail traveled for many days looking for its new home. It usually traveled early in the morning or during the night. Cloudy days were good, too, because the sun didn't make the snail too hot. But there were other dangers besides the sun to worry about.

One night, a raccoon tried to eat the snail. It hit the snail with its paw. The snail quickly slipped inside its shell. The



raccoon picked up the shell and shook it, trying to get the animal to come out. But a strong muscle held the snail in its shell. After a while, the raccoon gave up.

Finally the snail crawled into a garden. There were tasty plants to eat. There were a lot of damp places to hide, such as the roots of a shady tree, a patch of mushrooms, and a jumble of rocks. Salamanders were hiding under the rocks, and grass frogs hopped around the garden. Earthworms tunneled through the soil, making it a good place for plants to grow. Beetles crawled through the dirt. The snail settled down under a leaf and began to eat. It was home at last!