



RI.2.4/ RI.3.4- Unknown Words Name: _____ Date: _____

The Black Widow Spider

Black widow spiders are one of the most **dreaded** spiders in North America. This is because they are **venomous**, or poisonous. They are called black widows because the females usually eat their mates!

Black widow spiders are **arachnids**. Arachnids are animals with eight legs. This spider is easily recognized because it usually has a red or orange hourglass shape on its stomach. Females have shiny, dark black bodies and are about 1-2 inches long. Males are a lighter black. They are about half the size of females. Some males have red spots on their backs.

Black widows live in **moderate** climates all around the world. Areas with cold winters are too cold for them. They can be found in the southern and western parts of the United States. They are also found in South America, Southern Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa.

Black widows eat other arachnids and various insects. Their diet includes flies, ants, mosquitoes, caterpillars, cockroaches, and grasshoppers. They trap their prey in webs. Then, they use their feet to wrap their prey in silk. Next, they injure their prey with their fangs. Finally, they inject digestive enzymes into the insects. The insect's organs liquefy, and the spiders suck up the liquid. The black widow can live for months without eating. Some can live up to a year without food!

Black widows are one of the most venomous spiders to **reside** in North America. Their venom can be fifteen times stronger than rattlesnake venom! While this sounds **treacherous**, these predators will only strike humans if they are disturbed. Their bites are painful, but if they are treated, they rarely cause death.

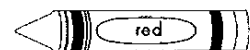


Black Widow Spider

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated.

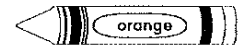
1. What is the meaning of "dreaded" as it is used in the first paragraph of the passage?

- a. loved
- b. feared
- c. famous
- d. interesting



RI.2.4/ 3.4- Unknown Words

2. Read these sentences from paragraph 1 of the passage:

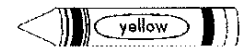


*Black widow spiders are one of the most **dreaded** spiders in North America. This is because they are **venomous**, or poisonous.*

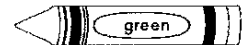
What does the word "venomous" mean in paragraph 1? (Pick all that apply.)

- a. toxic
- b. Scary
- c. frightful
- d. fascinating

3. What is the meaning of the word "arachnids" in paragraph 2?



4. What is the meaning of the word "moderate" in paragraph 3?



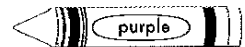
5. Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of the passage:



*Black widows are one of the most venomous spiders to **reside** in North America.*

What does the word "reside" mean in paragraph 5?

6. What is the meaning of the word "treacherous" in paragraph 5?



- a. safe
- b. amazing
- c. exciting
- d. dangerous