



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.

- 1) Which choich best describes the color of mealworms?
A. blue
B. yellow
C. green
D. red
- 2) Where do mealworms like to live?
A. Sunny, dry places
B. In the sand at the beach
C. On leaves
D. Dark, damp places
- 3) How long does it take for mealworm pupae to turn into adult Darkling Beetles?
A. a few hours
B. 6 months
C. one year
D. a couple of weeks
- 4) How many eggs does a female lay?
A. Just one
B. millions
C. hundreds
D. they do not lay eggs
- 5) What is the hard outer shell of mealworms called?
A. Armor
B. Exoskeleton
C. Endoskeleton
D. Shell
- 6) What is another name for mealworms?
A. Snail
B. Worm
C. Caterpillar
D. Darkling Beetle larva
- 7) Where might you find a mealworm?
A. under logs
B. in caves
C. in the ocean
D. in trees
- 8) How do mealworms benefit the environment?
A. They filter dirty water using a special sack in their abdomen
B. They scare away pests that feed on crops
C. They only eat plants that are poisonous to humans
D. They help break down dead plants and animals
- 9) What do mealworms like to eat?
A. Seeds and nuts
B. Grains, vegetables, and decaying matter
C. Insects and worms
D. Mice and other rodents
- 10) What is one use of mealworms by humans?
A. a filter for water
B. pest control in gardens
C. a cheap source of protein
D. food for pets

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

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



- 12) "I'm considered a pest."
- 13) "We fancy grains and vegetables, they provide us with all the nutrients we need."
- 14) "Sure, I may look like a worm, but I'm actually a baby Darkling Beetle in disguise!"
- 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
- 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
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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!
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- 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.
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- 64) Meal worms can eat a variety of things including grains, vegetables, fruits, and even decaying animals!
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| 1. _____ | 26. _____ | 51. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 27. _____ | 52. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 28. _____ | 53. _____ |
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| 1. <u>B</u> | 26. <u>false</u> | 51. <u>D</u> |
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| 3. <u>D</u> | 28. <u>true</u> | 53. <u>C</u> |
| 4. <u>A</u> | 29. <u>fact</u> | 54. <u>exclamatory</u> |
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