

Giant African Snails

ESL Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Giant African snails are among the largest land snails in the world. These **massive** creatures can grow up to eight inches long, which is about the size of an adult human hand. They originally come from East Africa, but they have spread to many countries around the world. Their brown shells have beautiful **spiral** patterns that help them blend into the forest floor. Scientists study these snails to learn more about **invertebrates** and how animals adapt to new environments.



These snails are **nocturnal** animals, which means they are most active at night. During the day, they hide under leaves and rocks to stay cool and moist. They eat more than five hundred different types of plants, making them very **adaptable** eaters. Giant African snails love fruits, vegetables, and even tree bark. Their **appetite** is so big that farmers consider them dangerous pests in many countries.

One amazing fact about giant African snails is that they can live for up to ten years. They lay hundreds of eggs at a time, which helps their **population** grow quickly. Baby snails hatch from eggs after just two weeks and start eating immediately. The snails carry their homes on their backs and can **retreat** inside when they sense danger. Their shells protect them from predators and harsh weather conditions throughout their lives.

In some countries, people keep giant African snails as **exotic** pets. They are easy to care for and interesting to watch. However, owning these snails is illegal in many places because they can **damage** local ecosystems and crops. When released into the wild, they compete with native animals for food and space. Environmental groups work hard to control their spread in areas where they do not belong.

Scientists continue to research giant African snails for medical and **biological** purposes. Their slime contains proteins that may help heal wounds faster. Some cultures use snail slime in beauty products for healthier skin. Despite being considered pests, these creatures teach us important lessons about nature. Understanding giant African snails helps us protect both wildlife and agriculture around the world today.

A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|--|
| 1. massive _____ | a. a curved pattern that winds around a center |
| 2. spiral _____ | b. the total number of a species in an area |
| 3. invertebrates _____ | c. a strong desire or need for food |
| 4. nocturnal _____ | d. unusual or from a foreign country |
| 5. adaptable _____ | e. related to living things and life processes |
| 6. appetite _____ | f. to move back or withdraw to safety |
| 7. population _____ | g. active mainly during the night |
| 8. retreat _____ | h. animals without a backbone or spine |
| 9. exotic _____ | i. able to change to fit new conditions |
| 10. biological _____ | j. extremely large in size or amount |

B. True or False

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Giant African snails can grow up to eight inches long. _____ | 2. These snails are most active during the day. _____ | 3. Giant African snails eat only one type of plant. _____ |
| 4. The snails can live for up to ten years. _____ | 5. Baby snails hatch after two weeks. _____ | 6. It is legal to own these snails everywhere. _____ |
| 7. Snail slime may help heal wounds. _____ | 8. The snails originally come from South America. _____ | 9. Their shells protect them from predators. _____ |

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: massive, nocturnal, adaptable, population, retreat, exotic, appetite

1. Giant African snails are _____ creatures that can grow very large.
2. These snails are _____ animals that are most active at night.
3. They are _____ eaters that can survive on many different foods.
4. When in danger, the snails _____ into their protective shells.
5. Their huge _____ makes them a serious threat to farmers' crops.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. How large can giant African snails grow?
2. Where do giant African snails originally come from?
3. Why do farmers consider these snails to be dangerous pests?
4. What is one medical use scientists have found for snail slime?
5. Why is it illegal to own giant African snails in many countries?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Would you want a giant African snail as a pet? Why or why not?
2. How do you think we should control invasive species like these snails?
3. What other animals can you think of that carry their homes on their backs?

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Answer Key

A. Vocabulary: 1-j, 2-a, 3-h, 4-g, 5-i, 6-c, 7-b, 8-f, 9-d, 10-e

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-T, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-massive, 2-nocturnal, 3-adaptable, 4-retreat, 5-appetite

D. Comprehension: 1. Up to eight inches long (size of adult hand); 2. East Africa; 3. They eat over 500 types of plants and damage crops; 4. It contains proteins that may help heal wounds faster; 5. They damage local ecosystems and compete with native animals

