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Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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Name _____ Date _____

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READ THIS FIRST

The Monarch's Great Journey

From the book Wings Across a Continent, Chapter 3, pages 22 to 27

Each fall, millions of monarch butterflies leave Canada and the northern United States. They fly south as far as 3,000 miles. Their goal is a small group of mountain forests in central Mexico. This long trip is called a migration. No single butterfly has made the trip before. Yet somehow, they find their way.

A Generation Like No Other

Most monarchs live only two to six weeks as adults. The butterflies born in late summer are different. These "super generation" monarchs can live up to eight months. Their bodies do not make eggs until spring, which saves energy for flying. They need that long life to fly to Mexico, rest through the winter and start the trip back north.

Finding the Way

Scientists think monarchs use the sun as a compass. Special cells in their antennae help them keep track of the time of day. Then they adjust their direction as the sun moves across the sky. On cloudy days, they may also sense Earth's magnetic field. Scientists are still testing this idea.

Map caption: Orange arrows show fall routes from the north. Most routes come together in Texas before crossing into Mexico.

Winter in the Mountains

The monarchs reach Mexico in early November. They gather in fir trees high in the mountains. So many butterflies cluster together that branches bend under their weight. The cool air slows them down and helps them save energy until spring. On warm afternoons, some fly down to mountain streams to drink.

Counting the Monarchs

Scientists cannot count every monarch in Mexico. Instead, they measure how much forest the butterflies cover each winter. In one winter in the 1990s, monarchs covered about 45 acres. In the winter of 2023 to 2024, they covered only about 2 acres.

The Trip North

In March, the monarchs leave Mexico. They lay eggs on milkweed plants in the southern United States. Their children and grandchildren continue the journey north. It takes three or four generations to reach Canada again.

Sidebar: Plant a Way Station
Monarch caterpillars feed on only one kind of plant: milkweed. In many places, milkweed has disappeared. Families and schools can help by planting milkweed and other flowers. These gardens are called way stations.

Table: Monarch Travel Facts
Longest fall trip: about 3,000 miles
Distance flown in one day: 25 to 100 miles
Height of the winter forests: about 10,000 feet

Glossary
generation: all the living things born around the same time
migration: a long trip animals make from one region to another, often each season

Index (from the full book)
antennae, 24
fir trees, 25, 41
milkweed, 26–27, 44–47
sun compass, 24
way stations, 27, 48

1. This chapter covers pages 22 to 27. Use the index. Which page outside this chapter tells more about way stations?

page 27 page 41 page 24 page 48

2. Under which heading would a reader learn why the fall monarchs live so long?
   The Trip North Finding the Way Winter in the Mountains
   A Generation Like No Other

3. According to the map caption, where do most fall routes come together?
   in Texas along the Atlantic coast in central Mexico in Canada

4. What does the table tell you that the main paragraphs do not?
   how far a monarch can fly in one day
   when the monarchs reach Mexico
   which plant the caterpillars need
   how long the longest fall trip is

5. Why did the author put "Plant a Way Station" in a sidebar?
   It explains how monarchs use the sun to find their way.
   It offers a way to help, apart from the story of the journey.
   It describes what happens in the mountains in winter.
   It is the main idea of the whole chapter.

6. How do the sidebar and the section "The Trip North" work together?
   The sidebar disagrees with the section about when monarchs leave Mexico.
   Both describe how monarchs find their way to Mexico.
   The section says monarchs lay eggs on milkweed; the sidebar explains why losing milkweed matters.
   Both list how many miles monarchs fly each day.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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