Grade 6
Reading Science
The Remarkable Journey of Monarch Butterflies

Every fall, millions of delicate Monarch butterflies make a remarkable journey from North America to central Mexico. This migration covers a staggering 3,000 miles, and the butterflies achieve this epic feat without any maps, compasses, or GPS devices. What makes this even more fascinating is that the butterflies that migrate to Mexico have never been there before!

The Monarchs begin their journey in the cool regions of Canada and the U.S., where they spend the summer breeding and feeding on milkweed. As the days get shorter and the temperatures begin to drop, the butterflies sense that it's time to migrate south. They head to the Oyamel fir forests in the mountains of Mexico, where they huddle together to keep warm during the winter months.

How do these tiny creatures navigate with such precision? Scientists believe they use a combination of environmental cues, including the Earth's magnetic field and the position of the sun. Remarkably, these butterflies have specialized cells in their antennae and wings that can detect changes in the environment, helping them stay on course.

The journey isn't easy. During their migration, Monarchs face numerous challenges such as storms, predators, and decreasing habitats due to human activities. Yet, they persevere, flying up to 100 miles a day.

When spring arrives, the butterflies start their return journey north. But here's another twist: it's not the same butterflies that return! The ones that migrated to Mexico will mate and die there. Their offspring, born in Mexico, will continue the journey north, completing the circle of life for the Monarchs.

The Monarch butterfly migration is one of nature's most captivating phenomena, showcasing the resilience, adaptability, and sheer wonder of the animal kingdom.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1.Where do Monarch butterflies migrate to in the winter?

A) Canada

B) Central Mexico

C) USA

D) Europe

2. Which plant do Monarchs feed on during the summer?

A) Oak

B) Sunflower

C) Milkweed

D) Rose

3. How do Monarchs navigate during their migration?

A) Using maps

B) Following the stars

C) Using the Earth’s magnetic field and position of the sun

D) Asking other animals

4. How far can Monarchs fly in a day during migration?

A) 10 miles

B) 50 miles

C) 100 miles

D) 500 miles

5. Who completes the return journey to the north in spring?

A) The same butterflies that went to Mexico

B) Birds

C) The offspring of the butterflies that went to Mexico

D) Humans

6. When do Monarchs begin their migration journey?

A) Spring

B) Summer

C) Fall

D) Winter

7. What challenges do Monarchs face during their migration?

A) Storms, predators, and decreasing habitats

B) Earthquakes

C) Traffic

D) Cold weather in Mexico

8. Which cells in the Monarchs help them detect environmental changes?

A) Cells in their eyes

B) Cells in their antennae and wings

C) Cells in their legs

D) Cells in their abdomen

9. Why do Monarchs migrate to Mexico?

A) To find food

B) To escape predators

C) To keep warm during the winter months

D) To meet other species of butterflies

10. The Monarch butterfly migration showcases the _____ of the animal kingdom.

A) Danger

B) Simplicity

C) Resilience and wonder

D) Predictability

Answers and Explanations:

1. B. Central Mexico

The passage states that Monarch butterflies migrate to central Mexico every fall.

2. C. Milkweed

The passage mentions that Monarchs feed on milkweed during the summer.

3. C. Using the Earth's magnetic field and position of the sun

The text says that Monarchs use environmental cues, including the Earth's magnetic field and the position of the sun.

4. C. 100 miles
The passage indicates that Monarchs can fly up to 100 miles a day during migration.

5. C. The offspring of the butterflies that went to Mexico
The text mentions that the offspring born in Mexico continue the journey north.

6. C. Fall
The passage states that Monarchs begin their migration every fall.

7. A/ Storms, predators, and decreasing habitats
The text lists storms, predators, and decreasing habitats as challenges for Monarchs during migration.

8. B. Cells in their antennae and wings
The passage mentions that Monarchs have specialized cells in their antennae and wings for detection.

9. C. To keep warm during the winter months
The text says that Monarchs huddle together in the Oyamel fir forests in Mexico to keep warm during winter.

10. C. Resilience and wonder

The passage concludes by mentioning the resilience, adaptability, and wonder of the animal kingdom in the context of the Monarch migration.