

Name: _____

Date: _____

Beetles in the Desert

The Mendez family is going on a trip to a national park. The national park is in the desert, not far from their home. Ramona and her little brother, Lucas, are very excited.

When they arrive at the park, Ramona and Lucas rush out of the car. “We want to go explore!” they call to their parents.

They run to check out some nearby rocks. Lucas crouches down and peeks under a rock.

“Hey! Look at this beetle!” Lucas exclaims. “It’s green!”

“No way! A green beetle?” Ramona replies. She runs over to look.

Just then, a park ranger walks by and stops. “That’s a green beetle,” she says. “There are also brown, black, yellow, and red beetles like that one. Sometimes you can even find beetles of other colors.”



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The ranger adds, “These beetles live all over the world. They can live anywhere it isn’t too cold. What else do you notice about the green beetle?”

“Well,” Ramona says, “it has six legs. That means it’s an insect.”

“That’s right!” replies the ranger.

“It also has horns on the top of its head,” Lucas adds.

“Those are actually called **antennae**,” the ranger corrects Lucas.

“That’s how the beetles sense what’s around them. The males sometimes use their antennae when they fight, too.”



Just then, a lizard darts out from under another rock. As it runs by, it grabs the beetle with its mouth.

“That lizard is called a **skink**,” the ranger tells the children. “Skinks eat beetles that live in the desert. They like to eat more beetles of some colors than other colors.”

“Why do they do that?” Ramona asks.

The ranger replies, “Come back to the visitor center later. I can show you a model that will help you understand.”