

Pre-Intermediate 2
Unit 3 Reading
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Life at a Snail's Pace

pace = speed, velocity = how fast somebody or something moves
at a snail's pace = too slowly

How far can you walk in an hour? Five miles? Three miles? Thirteen feet?

1 mile \approx 1.6 kilometers
5 miles \approx 8 kilometers
3 miles \approx 4.8 kilometers
foot (singular) \Rightarrow feet (plural)
1 foot \approx 30 cm
13 feet \approx 3.9 meters = 390 centimeters

"Thirteen feet!" you might say. "That's not far. That's moving at a snail's pace!" One kind of land snail moves at thirteen or fourteen feet an hour. That's slow to us, but maybe we wouldn't think so if we carried our houses with us. And that's what a snail does.

! = exclamation mark
kind = sort, type
land snail = a snail that lives on land, not in water
maybe = perhaps
think so = think like this, think in this way
so = like this, as such

Wherever it goes, a snail moves on a carpet of glue that comes from a gland in its body. The sticky stuff does its job well. Snails can crawl along the sharp edge of a razorblade without being cut!

wherever = in every place that
carpet = a layer of something that covers the ground
glue = a sticky substance
gland = a part of the body which produces a hormone
sticky = made of or covered with a substance that stays attached to any surface it touches
stuff = material
crawl = to move along on hands and knees or with your body stretched out along a surface
along \neq across
edge = brink = the outer or furthest point of something
sharp \neq blunt



A Snail along the Sharp Edge of a Razorblade

Hot sun will dry out a snail's body, so on hot sunny days, it draws its body into its shell and closes the opening with a thin cover of glue. A snail will drown in heavy rain. So whenever it rains, a snail goes inside its shell house and goes to sleep. A snail can sleep for as long as it needs to. It spends all winter in its shell, asleep.

so = therefore, thus

on + Day

Don't Say: **in** a hot sunny day

Say: **on** a hot sunny day

drown = die in water

whenever = every or any time

shell house = a house made of shell

shell = the hard outer covering of something, especially nuts, eggs, and some animals

Brazil nuts have very hard shells.

A piece of shell fell into the cake mixture.

the shell of a snail/crab/tortoise

a shell necklace (= a piece of jewelry made out of the shells of small sea creatures)

A snail can sleep for as long as it needs to. = A snail can sleep for as long as it needs to sleep.

asleep ≠ awake

In spring, the snail wakes up and gradually stretches its three-inch-long body out of its shell. It hunts for food hungrily everywhere. It can't see very well, but its sense of smell helps it find fresh greens. Its tiny mouth, no bigger than the point of a pin, begins to work. Its 25,600 teeth are so small you can't see them, but they do their work well. A snail can eat for hours and never feel full.

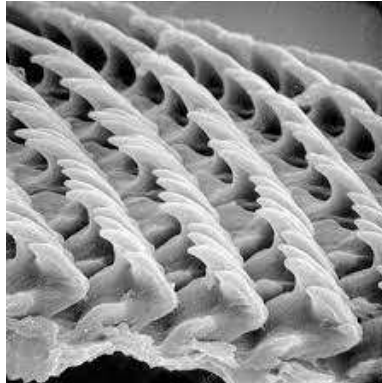
gradually = little by little ≠ suddenly

stretch = extend

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
3 inches = 7.62 centimeters
three-inch-long body = body which is 3 inches long
hunt for = Search for
greens = herbs, vegetables, and leaves
tiny = very small
begin = start
25,600 = twenty-five thousand (and) six hundred
tooth (singular) = **teeth** (plural)

So = very
So = like this, as such
So = therefore, thus, then

feel full ≠ feel hungry



Teeth of a Snail under a Microscope

Twice a year, in spring and fall, the snail stops eating and goes to look for a mate. Twelve to fifteen days after mating, it lays eggs in a hole in a damp, flat spot near the trunk of a tree or in a clump of grass. The fertile snail may drop as many as twenty-six eggs. It covers them and goes away, and after three or four weeks the eggs hatch into tiny baby snails with paper-thin shells.

mate (noun) = an animal's sexual partner

Peacocks use their beautiful tails to attract mates.

mate (verb) = to have sex and produce young, or to make animals do this

Tigers mate repeatedly over a period of several days.

Mating a horse with a donkey produces a mule.

lay = put

lay ⇒ laid, laid

✚ *The hen hasn't laid an egg yet.*

damp = wet

flat = even, smooth

spot (noun) = place, location

trunk = the body of a tree

stem = the body of a small plant

clump = group, mass, pile

fertile (adjective) = able to produce children, productive

fertility (noun) = being fertile

hatch = break the shell of an egg

Proverb

- *Don't count your chickens before they hatch.*

paper-thin shells = shells as thin as paper

Snails are fun to watch, but they are hard to spot because they are very small. If you find one, try to put it on a piece of glass. Then raise the glass and watch the snail from underneath. You can see how it moves — at a snail's pace.

spot (verb) = to see or notice someone or something, usually because you are looking hard

I've just spotted Mark - he's over there, near the entrance.

If you spot any mistakes in the article just mark them with a pencil.

spot (noun) = a particular place

This looks like a nice spot for a picnic.

raise = lift ⇔ /ei/

rise = go up ⇔ /ai/

underneath = the bottom part



A Snail on a Piece of Glass Watched from Underneath

Full Text:

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Twice a year, in spring and fall, the snail stops eating and goes to look for a mate. Twelve to fifteen days after mating, it lays eggs in a hole in a damp, flat spot near the trunk of a tree or in a clump of grass. The fertile snail may drop as many as twenty-six eggs. It covers them and goes away, and after three or four weeks the eggs hatch into tiny baby snails with paper-thin shells.

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Sample Summary:

Snails move very slowly, about 13-14 feet per hour, because they carry their homes on their backs. They travel on a sticky substance from their bodies, which even lets them crawl on sharp objects without getting hurt. To avoid drying out in the sun or drowning in rain, snails retreat into their shells and can sleep for long periods. In spring, they wake up, search for food using their sense of smell, and eat with their tiny, tooth-filled mouths. Twice a year, they mate and lay eggs, which hatch into baby snails. Snails are small and hard to spot, but fascinating to watch, especially on glass.

Source:

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