

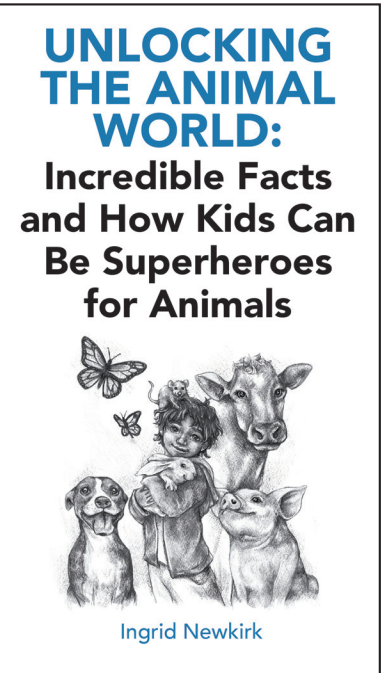
Name: _____ Date: _____

Family First

When you hear words like “love” and “family,” do you think of slimy, bloodsucking leeches? Probably not. But even though your aunt might not send you a sweet card with pictures of leeches on it anytime soon, these flat worms are caring family members. Leech grown-ups take great care of their young as they grow. They shuttle them from safe place to safe place and protect them from danger.

Other small animals demonstrate big love, too. Wolf spiders carry their unhatched babies in pouches, like wearing a backpack. Once the spiderlings hatch from their sac, they nestle into the hair on their mother’s back until they’re big enough to live on their own. Even while the mothers are running and jumping, they defend their babies.

But when it comes to which little animals make the biggest display of love, the winners might just be exploding ants. Tree-dwelling ants in the jungles of Southeast Asia have the scientific name *Colobopsis explodens* for a good reason. They have sacs on their bodies that hold poisonous yellow goo. When an intruder tries to attack their colony, the ants defend it with their lives: They make themselves explode, spraying the invader with the sticky, icky fluid and saving the day. The next time someone you love asks you to help out around the house by picking up your clothes or doing the dishes, just remember: At least they didn’t ask you to explode!



Answer Sheet

Main Idea and Supporting Details

(Answers may vary.)

Title:

Family First

Main Idea:

Even not-so-cuddly animals demonstrate love for their families.

UNLOCKING THE ANIMAL WORLD:

Incredible Facts
and How Kids Can
Be Superheroes
for Animals



Ingrid Newkirk

Supporting Detail:

Leeches shuttle their young from safe place to safe place and protect them from danger.

Supporting Detail:

Wolf spider mothers shield and defend their babies even while they're running and jumping.

Supporting Detail:

Colobopsis explodens have sacs on their bodies that hold poisonous yellow goo. When an intruder tries to attack their colony, the ants defend it with their lives: They make themselves explode, spraying the invader with the icky, sticky fluid and saving the day.