

Plant and Animal Cells

Read the paragraph and then answer the questions.

All living things on Earth are divided into cells. Cells are called the “building blocks of life.” Cells are like small compartments that hold the tools needed to keep an organism alive and healthy. There are some living things that are single-celled and some that have millions of cells, like humans.

In larger organisms, the main purpose of a cell is to organize. There are different types of cells and each type of cell has a different purpose. Plants and animals are both made up of cells. Plant and animal cells have parts that are the same and parts that are different. All cells have a nucleus, cytoplasm, a cell membrane, mitochondria and ribosomes. Plant cells also have a cell wall, chloroplasts and a permanent vacuole.

Over 300 years ago, a Dutch naturalist named Anton van Leeuwenhoek (Lay-ven-hook) was the first person to see a single-celled life form swimming around in blood and pond water. He used a magnifying glass and a very basic microscope to see the life forms. He called the organisms “animalcules.” Five years after that, a man named Robert Hooke looked at a piece of cork under a microscope. He saw small empty spaces which he called cells, meaning small rooms. In 1839, two German scientists figured out that the cells that both Leeuwenhoek and Hooke saw were the basic unit of almost all life forms.

1. Use the information that you read to draw an inference about what the phrase the “building blocks of life” means? _____

2. What sentence helps you draw an inference about the parts that animal cells have?

3. How do you think that the two German scientists figured out what Leeuwenhoek and Hooke saw? _____

4. Which sentence explains what a cell is? _____
