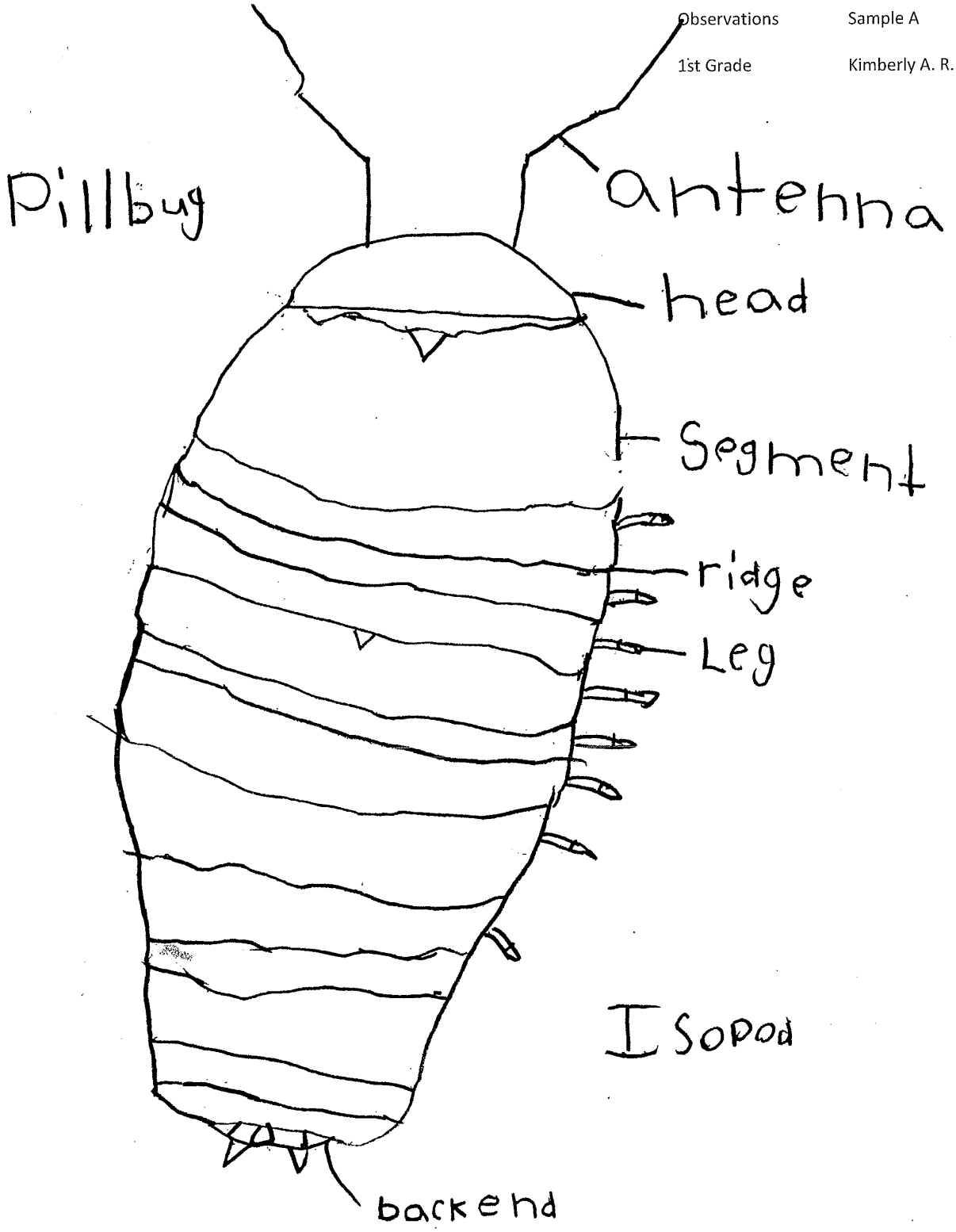
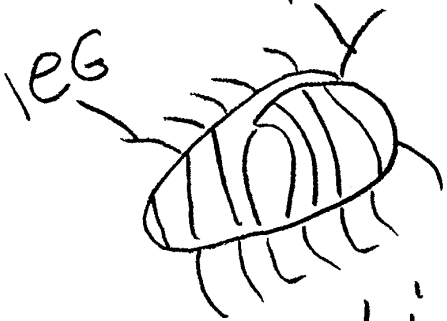
Observations Sample A

1st Grade Kimberly A. R.



11-13-08

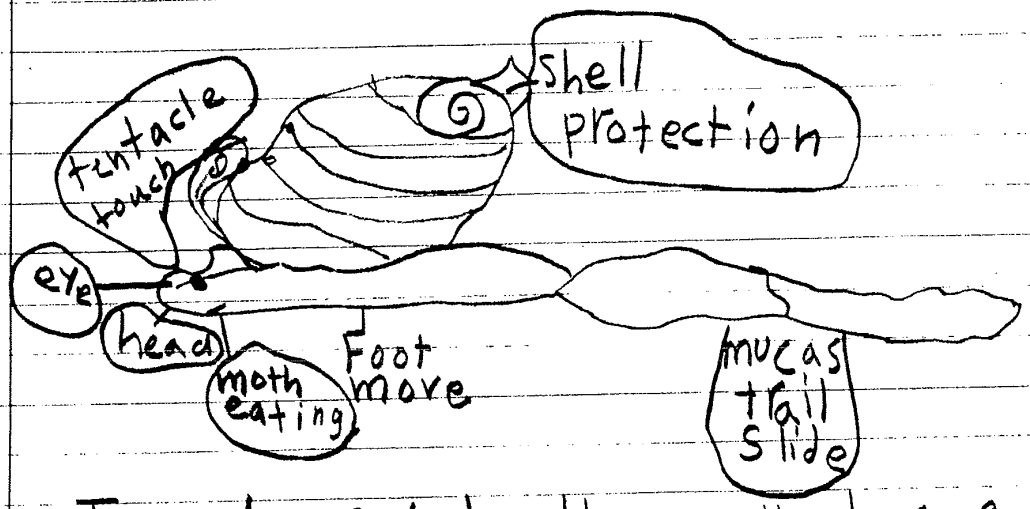
What do you observe about the isopods?



I noticed thAt tAU HAV a tAiL AND I think thAt uost For Gitinup

7) What do our senses tell us about snails' bodies and behaviors?

Pond snail



I odserved the snail has a mucas trale decause it slid. The snail has a shell for Protection. I wonder how meny inchis the snail is.

11/14/08

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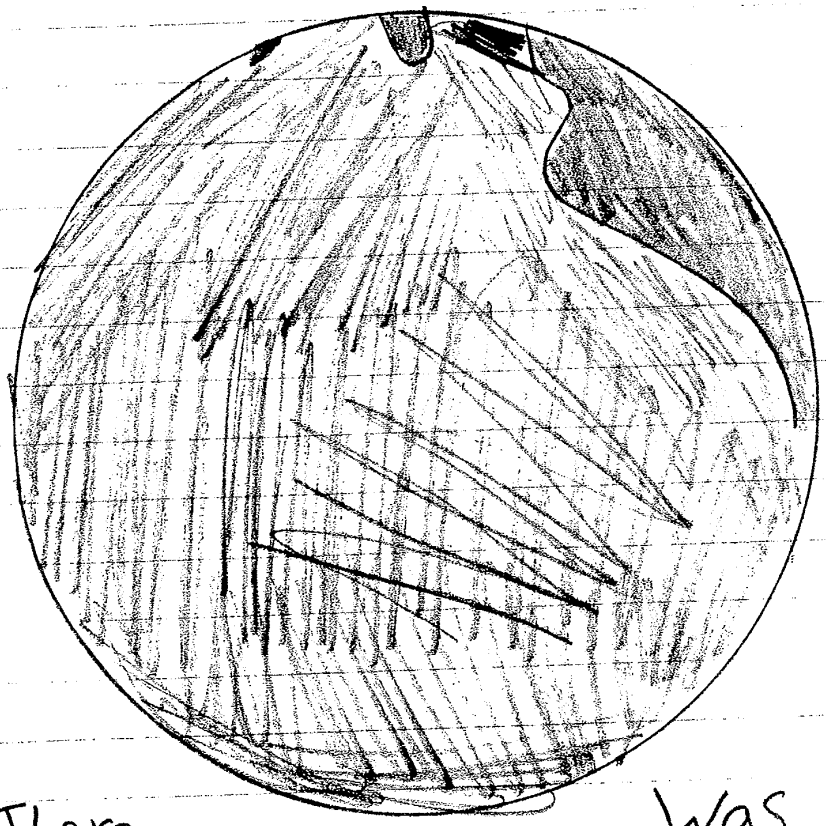

There was
mour watdr yestrday
and Today is
Lisst watdr

First Grade, Sample A—*Organisms* Unit: Kimberly A. R.

- Kimberly's scientific illustration has all the characteristics of an exemplary scientific illustration. It has a title (actually, two titles: *Pillbug* and *Isopod*) and is accurate, detailed, and large enough to show the details. Each line clearly points to the appropriate part, which is correctly labeled.
- Note that the teacher could have had the students draw a smaller illustration and they still could have included just as many details in less time than it takes to draw large drawings.

First Grade, Sample B—*Organisms* Unit: Shane

- Students have been studying the functions of the different parts of organisms.
- Shane makes a labeled scientific illustration, then writes a scientific observation and an inference about the function of a part: "I noticed that tau hav [they have] a tail and I think that uost [used] for gitinup [getting up]." Note that the phrase *I think* prompts students to make inferences after they have reported an observation.

First Grade, Sample C—*Organisms* Unit: Ella

- Ella makes a detailed scientific illustration, then adds labels and functions of the parts, which her teacher has modeled.
- Students were supposed to write an observation that begins with "I observed," includes a part and its function, and ends with an "I wonder" statement. Ella includes two parts and their functions. You could ask, "How would a scientist find out how many inches long the snail is?"
- Note that Ella has connected the correct function with the mucus, but her use of *because* does not work. This is a common problem that students and adults can make when using *because*. You can help students learn to separate their observations from their thinking and inferences by using "I observed" and "I think," as in this example: "*I observed* the snail has a mucus trail. *I think* the snail slides on the mucus. *I observed* the snail has a hard shell. *I think* the shell protects the snail."

First Grade, Sample D—*Weather* Unit: Jesus

- Over several days, students have been observing a "puddle" they have made in a shallow pan. Their teacher asks them to write about what they have observed *yesterday* and *today* as a means of comparing a change over time, with the two words prompting students to report observations for each day. Without the two words, students typically report data from only one day.
- Jesus makes an accurate qualitative statement about his comparison of the amount of water: "There was mour watdr [more water] yestrday and today is lisst watdr [less water]." If students measure the amount of water, they can add quantitative data to support a qualitative claim (for example, "There was *more* water yesterday and *less* water today. Yesterday, there was *one cup* of water, but today there was only *three-fourths cup* of water.").