Tardigrades: Tiny and Tough

Name _____ **Date** _____

Read the passage. Use evidence from the text in your answers.

Meet the **tardigrade**, also called the water bear. Most tardigrades are about half a millimeter long or smaller, so you would need a microscope to see one clearly. They have eight stubby legs with tiny claws, and they waddle a bit like a bear. Scientists have described more than 1,300 species.

Tardigrades live almost everywhere: in moss and lichen, in soil, in the deep sea and even in Antarctica. Their real superpower is survival. When their home dries out, a tardigrade can pull in its legs, lose almost all of its water and curl into a dry little ball called a **tun**. In this state its body nearly stops working, and it can wait for years. Add water, and it can wake up again.

In 2007, scientists sent dried tardigrades into orbit on a space mission and exposed them to the vacuum of space. When they came back to Earth, some of them revived. That makes tardigrades one of the toughest animals ever studied.

Questions

1. **What is a tun, and why does a tardigrade form one?**

_____

2. **Name three places tardigrades can be found.**

_____

3. **What did the 2007 space experiment show?**

_____

4. **The author calls tardigrades "one of the toughest animals." Give two pieces of evidence.**

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