

**Student Comprehension Worksheet**

**Directions:** After reading the online *Science News* article "[A single molecule may entice normally solitary locusts to form massive swarms](#)," answer the following questions. A version of the story, "Chemical coaxes locusts to swarm," can be found in the September 12, 2020 issue of *Science News*. If you are reading the print version, skip question No. 8.

- 1. What are locusts? Why does the author describe them as both harmless loners and plagues?**
- 2. How large can locust swarms get?**
- 3. What area of the world is currently plagued by locusts? Why do you think the author included this information in the article?**
- 4. What do scientists suspect causes locusts to swarm? How might it work?**
- 5. Name the molecule that scientists identified as a potential locust aggregation pheromone. What effect does it have on locusts?**
- 6. What evidence do the scientists present supporting the claim that the molecule is an aggregation pheromone?**
- 7. List three ways this discovery could be used to improve locust control measures.**
- 8. According to the online *Science News* article, what are potential drawbacks of some of the proposed measures?**

**9. What does the expression “smoking gun” mean? It is an example of a literary device called an idiom. Based on the context of the article, explain what an idiom is.**

**10. Is there evidence that the newly identified molecule is the smoking gun when it comes to locust swarm formation?**