

Much Ado About BUGS!

Feeling a little squeamish about exploring the sometimes creepy, sometimes crawly world of bugs? Put your worries aside. This collection of activities is swarming with fascinating facts and enticing activities your students are sure to love. So when you're ready to get the dirt on bugs—dig in!

ideas by Michele Converse Baerns and Jill Hamilton

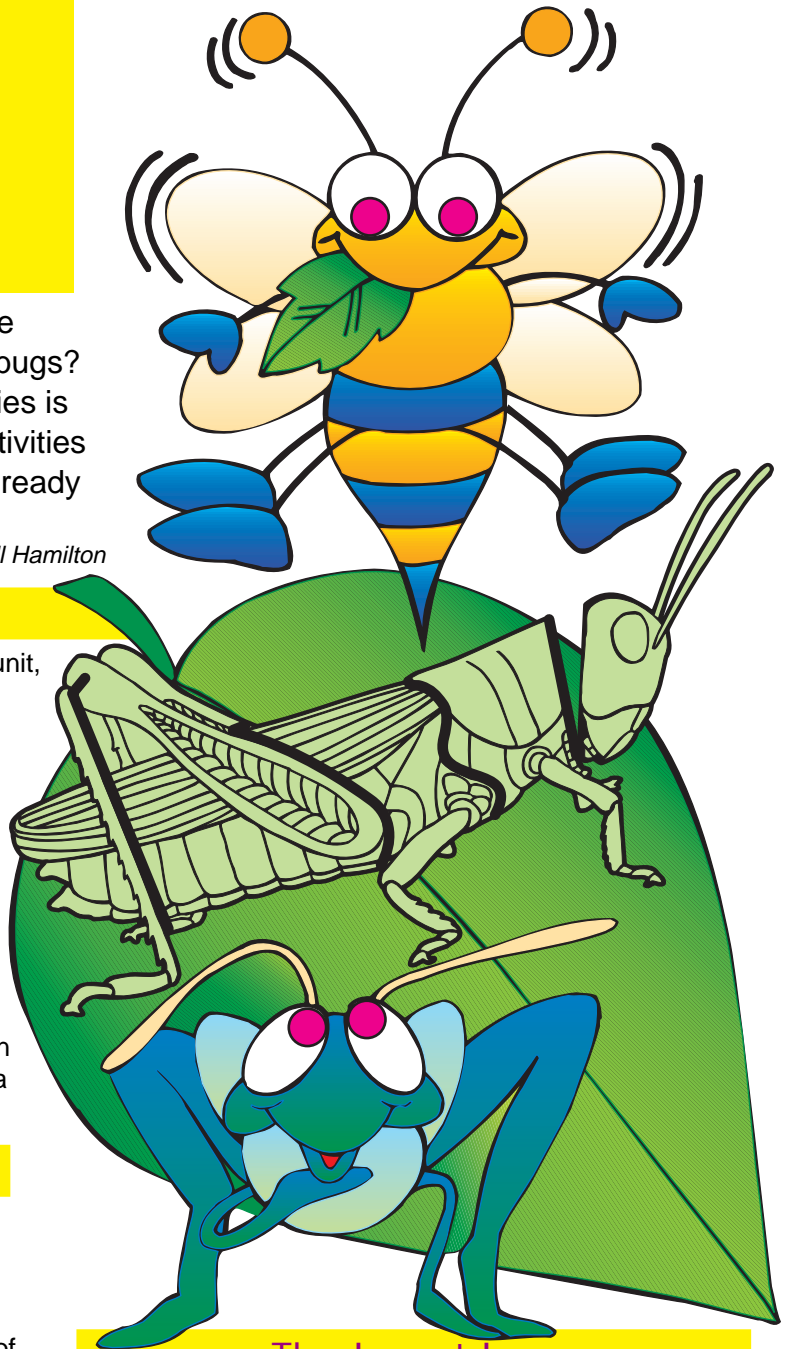
A Buggy Beginning

Bugs are really amazing animals! To begin your bug unit, enlarge each of the six bug patterns on page 9 onto a 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper. Trim around each shape; then cut each shape into four or five large puzzle pieces. Divide students into six groups and give each group a set of puzzle pieces to assemble. After a group has constructed its puzzle and identified the resulting bug, give the group a book that contains information about its bug and some colorful markers. Challenge the group to label the back of each piece of its puzzle with a different fact about its bug. Set aside time for the groups to share their completed projects. If desired, laminate the completed puzzles and place each puzzle in a large resealable plastic bag. Store the puzzle bags at a center for further hands-on exploration!

What Is An Insect?

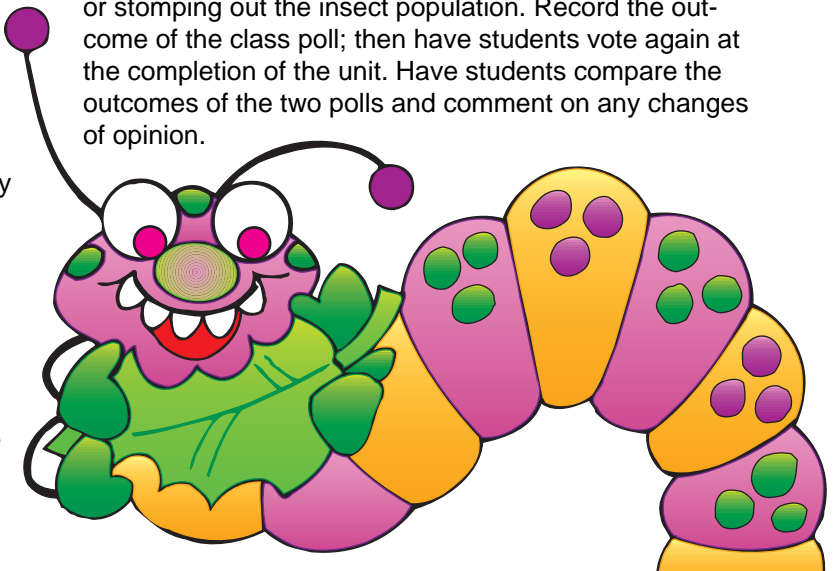
Share these ten fascinating facts about insects with your students:

- Insects are small animals with six legs. Insects use their legs to run, walk, jump, dig, and even sing!
- There are approximately five million different kinds of insects in the world.
- Insects wear their skeletons on the outside of their bodies. This *exoskeleton* protects an insect's body like a suit of armor.
- An insect has a heart, a brain, a tummy, air sacs, and nerves. These organs don't look like human organs, but they function in similar ways.
- All insects are cold-blooded. Sometimes big bugs shiver before they fly. What they are really doing is warming up their flight muscles so they'll work!
- Most insects live short lives. Some adult insects only live a few hours!
- Insects do not have noses; they smell with their antennae, or feelers.
- Insects can see, smell, and hear some things that humans cannot.
- Scientists are not sure what insects can feel.
- Insects communicate with each other in a variety of ways. Some insects flash lights, sing, dance, or use smelly chemicals to signal each other.



The Insect Issue

Even though insects—the largest animal group—are often very beneficial to humans, they are not very popular. Take a class poll before you continue your study of insects to find out if your youngsters are in favor of saving or stomping out the insect population. Record the outcome of the class poll; then have students vote again at the completion of the unit. Have students compare the outcomes of the two polls and comment on any changes of opinion.



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