



Insect Extravaganza

Insects are important creatures in nature and a part of our lives on a daily basis. Learning about basic insect anatomy and the benefits of insects can help children to get past their fears and see the amazing in front of them!

Insect Basics:

Small Size: Insects are very small in comparison to other animals. They can live in small spaces other animals can't.

Exoskeleton: Insects don't have bones inside their body for support like we do, they have a hard outer covering or shell called an exoskeleton. Their shell helps to protect them. It has 2 layers, the outside is like a raincoat to keep them waterproof and the inside is like armor



to protect the soft insides.

Segments: All insect bodies are made up of segments or parts. Insects have 3 main body parts: head, thorax and abdomen. How do you tell which is which? The head has the eyes, mouth and antennae, the thorax has the legs and wings attached and the abdomen is the part that is left on the end.

Legs: Most insects have 6 legs and some don't have any.



Wings: Insects are the only animals without backbones that can fly. Only the adults have wings. Most insects have 2 pairs of wings, flies only have 1 pair of wings and some insects like most ants don't have any wings. Being able to fly lets insects find new places

to live, discover new food sources, escape quickly from enemies and find mates.



Antennae: Most insects have 2 antennae on their heads. They use these to feel, smell and in some insects to hear.

Why are insects important?

Pollination: Insects pollinate many of our fruits, flowers, and vegetables. A lot of the foods that we eat would not exist without the pollinating services insects provide.



Eating machines:

Insects feed on a large variety of foods. Many insects are omniv-

orous, meaning that they can eat a variety of foods including plants, fungi, dead animals, decaying organic matter, and nearly anything they encounter in their environment. Still others are specialists in their diet, meaning they may eat only one kind of plant or even one part of a specific plant to survive.

Food for other animals:

Insects are the primary food source for many amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Insects are even collected and eaten by people in some cultures.

Waste collectors: Without insects to help break down and get rid of wastes, dead animals and plants would accumulate in our environment and it would be a very messy place to live.

Stories and Guides for Insect Explorations

Here are some books to help explore insects in the classroom.

[The Grouchy Ladybug](#) by Eric Carle

[How Many Bugs in a Box?](#)
[A Pop-up Counting Book](#) by David A Carter

[The Icky Bug Alphabet Book](#) by Jerry Pallotta
[In the Tall, Tall Grass](#) by Denise Fleming

[Ladybugs: Red, Fiery, and Bright](#) Mia Posada
[The Very Lazy Ladybug](#) by Isobel Finn and Jack Tick-

le
[The Very Greedy Bee](#) by Steve Smallman
[The Very Quiet Cricket Board Book](#) by Eric Carle
[Hey Little Ant](#) by Phil and Hanna Hoose

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Creepy Crawly Fun!

Fingerprint Creepers

Materials Needed: washable, colored ink pads; white paper; colored markers or colored pencils. The children press their fingers into the stamp pads and make fingerprints on their papers. They use the markers and/or pencils to make wings, feet, eyes, antennae, etc. Encourage them to draw where their bugs and insects live as well (a drainpipe, house, tree, etc.)



Egg Lightening Bugs

Get a small flameless LED tealight and place it into a plastic egg. (You can use glue to keep the light in place, but it's not necessary.) Next, use a thumbtack to poke holes through the egg to insert the pipe cleaners. Draw a pair of cute little bug eyes onto white sticky labels. Finally, sculpt wings using duct tape. Now set this little critter outside and watch it glow!

Busy Bugs Headbands

Materials needed: 1 1/2-2 in wide strips of paper, pipe cleaners, glue or tape

Have the children cut out two strips of paper that when connected will fit around their head. Connect the strips with glue or tape, (staples will catch the child's hair). Supply the children with two pipe cleaners... and have them shape them however they want to and tape them on the inside of the headband.

Lady Bug Lids

Materials needed: milk jug lids, black paint or marker, googly eyes.

Wash and dry the plastic lid. Paint on the head by using a paintbrush to add an almond shape at one end of the lid. Use the handle end of a paintbrush dipped in black paint to add the spots. Make some spots larger than others. Let all the paint dry. Add the googly eyes.



Activities for Further Learning and Fun

[Insects, Insects, All Around](#) *Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*

Lady bugs and butterflies,
Buzzing bees up in the sky.
Teeny, tiny little ants,
Crawling up and down the plants.
Many insects can be found
In the sky and on the ground.

[Lightning Bug](#) (Tune: *You are my Sunshine*)

I'm like a "lite brite"
I have a night light.
I fly in circles in the sky.
Some call me "lightning".
When my light's blinking.
But to my friends, I'm just "firefly."

While others sleep tight,
I flash my night light,
to fill the dark sky with light so bright.
Look out your window,
You'll see me flashing,
And then I'll turn off and tell you
"good night"

Insect Snack Ideas

Apple Ladybugs

Slice an apple in half lengthwise, and lay with cut side down on a plate. Use raisins as the ladybug's spots, put on with a dot of peanut butter. Attach a grape, as the head of the ladybug, with a toothpick and stick pretzel sticks into the grape for antennae.

Ants on a Log

Take celery cut into 4" lengths, peanut butter and raisins. Spread peanut butter in celery and arrange raisins on top. You can substitute cream cheese for peanut butter.



Make an Insect

Give the children pretzel sticks and mini pretzel twists for legs, antennae or wings, marshmallows for body parts, chocolate chips or raisins for eyes or spots, orange segments for wings, or body parts and have them make their own insect to eat.

