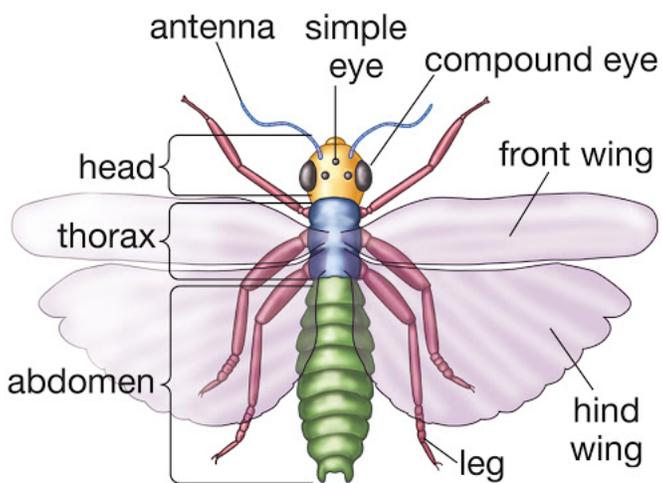


GATEWAY FROM HOME

Invent an Insect!

Did you know that there are over one million species of insects that *entomologists* (scientists who study insects) have discovered on earth? Insects make up 40% of the world's animals. They pollinate plants, break down dead plants and animals into nutrients, and are a food source for other organisms. Start this activity by learning about insects, where they live, and what they do – and then invent your very own species!

Insect anatomy:



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- **Antenna:** these “feeler” structures help insects smell and feel their environment
- **Eyes:** simple eyes have one lens (like ours), and compound eyes have many lenses. Compound eyes help insects see fast movement and many angles.
- **Legs:** all insects have six legs
- **Body:** insects have three body sections – a head (front section), thorax (middle section) and abdomen (rear section).
- **Wings:** Most insects have wings with two sections, a front wing and hind wing (although some insects have no wings at all).

Insect Habitats

Insects live all over the world in many different habitats! Here are some common places you can find these crawly critters:

Forests under leaves and logs

On and in other animals

Fruit trees

Beaches

Under rocks

Mountaintops

Freshwater ponds

Caves

Insect Foods

Insects eat many different things, depending on what their habitat is. Can you tell which food sources come from each habitat above?

Decaying leaves and plant matter

Plant nectar and pollen

Wood

Other insects

Worms and grubs

Animal dung

Fruit

Blood

Other vocabulary

Arthropod: all insects are arthropods, or animals that have an exoskeleton

Exoskeleton: this is the “external skeleton,” or hard jointed shell, that all arthropods and insects have.

Adaptation: insects have *adapted*, or developed special body parts and behaviors, to help them live in different environments and eat different kinds of foods.

Larva: the “baby,” worm-like stage of an insect’s life cycle

Metamorphosis: the process insects use to transition between body types in their life cycle, including from a caterpillar to a butterfly



Invent Your Insect!

My insect is called: _____

My insect's habitat: _____

My insect eats: _____

How my insect finds and eats its food: _____

What eats my insect: _____

How my insect moves around: _____

My insect's special behaviors _____

Draw Your Insect Here:

