

# Bugs



## Activities for Years 3 - 6 Classrooms

Students gain more from web based research or a museum visit if they are thoroughly prepared for the experience. Familiarize students with what they will see online or in the exhibition and discuss what they would like to find out. We recommend that a selection of 'Bug' appropriate activities are completed prior to their visit.

The following activities provide students with an understanding of some of the themes developed in the *Bugs Alive!* exhibition and the Museum Victoria website.

**BugCatcher** This interactive online activity encourages children to explore the variety of bugs in the museum collection drawers, sort or label specimens and catch bugs to fill the gaps. Just for fun, catch and label a fantasy Frankenbug!

**Build a bug** Research, design and build a model of a giant insect or spider.

**Compost – a home for bugs** Become an active composter. Composting provides ready access to a myriad of small invertebrate decomposers for you to study.

**Playground safari** This classification activity encourages students to observe, find, collect, record, sketch and identify a variety of invertebrates.

**Bug sense** Compare our own body functions and senses with those of insects.

**The cycle of life** Students create an environment around the life cycles of the dragonfly or diving beetle.

**Animals in the classroom** Keeping live animals in the classroom encourages children to observe, discuss and record changes that occur as animals grow.

**Insect body adaptation** Take a look at some of the insect body adaptations that have allowed insects to survive so successfully. Suitable for Years 5 and 6.

**Bug challenges – friends and foe – what is your solution?** Research one of the following topics and find out how introduced bugs may be useful or harmful to the Australian environment. Suitable for Years 5 and 6.

**Pests or pals** Investigate bugs that assist humans, those that cause problems, those that do both, and those bugs that don't seem to impact on us either way. Suitable for Years 5 and 6.



# Bugs



## Build a bug

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to observe the structure of invertebrates and use their understandings to construct a model.



### You will need

Construction materials such as cardboard, wire, polystyrene and fabrics.  
Illustrations or photographs of a variety of invertebrates.

### What to do

Research, design and build a model of a giant insect or spider, using cardboard, wire, polystyrene and other materials you think appropriate. During the research phase, use a variety of photographs and observe live specimens. Include the following in discussion of the structure of bugs.

- insects have three body segments with three pairs of legs attached to the thorax
- arachnids (spiders and scorpions) have two body segments with four pairs of legs
- legs are made up of a number of segments
- most winged insects have two pairs of wings
- flies and mosquitoes have only one pair of wings
  - the fore-wings of beetles have evolved into hard wing covers
- there are a variety of antennae types
- many species have a tail, cerci or abdominal sting.

Alternatively, build and name a totally imaginary giant bug.  
Each student or group should provide a name for their own 'bug'.

Bugs could all be displayed in an environment with giant grass and leaves.





## Compost – a home for bugs

This activity is to encourage students to be involved in recycling and to become aware of the importance of rotting material in the life cycles of many invertebrates.

### What to do

Become an active composter – at school and at home. Composting your school and household waste will provide an endless supply of nutrient rich soil for the garden, while giving you ready access to a myriad of small invertebrate decomposers for you to study. Ensure the compost heap remains moist as you continue to add grass clippings, leaves and suitable food scraps.

Advice on composting is easily obtained – for example:

The Good Compost Guide, EcoRecycle Victoria, 1998

CERES Environment Park, 8 Lee Street, Brunswick East, tel 9387 2609

The *Compost Creatures* poster, published by the Gould League, provides a guide to the animals that thrive in this environment.



# Bugs

## Playground safari

This classification activity encourages students to – find look collect record sketch and identify

### What to do:

Organise a 'bugs' field trip in the school ground. Encourage students to continue their exploration over several weeks and then report their findings. Instruct students to cause minimal disruption to the areas they are exploring.

#### → Where to look

in soil, under bark, in grass, in trees and bushes, in a garden bed, under rocks and logs, on plants, in water, in the air.

#### → Record class observations

Use Museum resource material to assist students to identify bugs and discover food preferences.

Name of bug	Number of legs	Number of wings	Food type	Habitat

#### → Classify the bugs

Collect photographs or draw pictures of each animal found. This collection can be used in a variety of classification activities. Bugs can be classified in a variety of ways:

##### Body structure.

Slugs, snails and worms have no legs. Insects have six legs. Arachnids have eight legs. Yabbies and slaters (Crustaceans and Isopods ) have up to twenty legs. Centipedes and millipedes (Chilopods) have more than twenty legs

##### Food preference

Herbivores.                      Carnivores.                      Decomposers

##### Habitat

Trees and bushes.      Soil                      Grass                      Rocks and logs  
Under bark              Water                      Buildings                      Garden plants



# Bugs



## Bug sense

The bodies of insects and the ways they sense their surroundings are very different from the bodies and sensory organs of humans. Compare our own senses with those of insects.

### What to do

→ **Discuss our own senses and body functions.**

**Touch:** The skin covering our body is sensitive to touch, however we mainly use our hands to feel objects.

**Taste:** Our tongue is able to distinguish sweet, bitter, sour, and salty.

**Hearing:** Our ears are used to detect sounds in our environment.

**Smell:** Our nose is able to detect a variety of odours drifting in the air.

**Sight:** If there is sufficient light our eyes are able to see objects around us in colour.

**Breathing:** Air is taken into our lungs through our nose and mouth.

**Eating:** Teeth, tongue, jaws and hands combine to help us eat.



→ **Discuss how some animals function and sense their surroundings. Some examples**

**Touch:** The bodies of invertebrates are sensitive to touch. Antennae (feelers) are used to detect odours rather than used in touch.

**Taste:** Flies taste with their feet.

**Hearing:** Bugs do not have ears but some insects are able to detect sounds. Mosquitoes detect sounds through their antennae, crickets through their fore-legs, cicadas use their thorax and grasshoppers have a sound receptor on their abdomen.

**Smell:** Many insects have a strong sense of smell. They use their antennae to detect odours in the air to locate food sources (eg flies) or other individuals of their own species (eg moths).

**Sight:** Some invertebrates can only detect shadows. Others are able to see colours, including ultra-violet light that is invisible to humans. Many insects have eyes that are composed of hundreds of lenses (compound eyes).

**Breathing:** Insects take in air through holes along the side of their bodies (spiracles)

**Eating:** Insects have a variety of structures to help them eat. Ants have strong jaws, butterflies have a long coiled tube, mosquitoes are able to pierce our skin to suck blood, and a praying mantis uses large front legs to catch and manipulate food.

→ **Have students research a particular animal. Bug facts located on this website is a good place to begin.**

→ **Add the results of student research to a class grid similar to the one below. Write down the body parts used for each sense or function.**

	Touch	Taste	Hearing	Smell	Sight	Breathing	Eating
Human							
butterfly							
katydid							
fly							