



# Getting Bugged

## level 3 pre-visit activity for fall

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Overview:	Students review what an insect is and the parts of an insect. Students explore areas for various types of insects. Students establish criteria for identifying insects. They create a comparison chart to use after the site visit that identifies the different types of insects found at their school site and their <i>Mighty Acorns</i> site.
Location:	School yard, school garden, nearby park, or a local grassy area with old fallen leaves, trees, old logs; etc.
Skills:	Analyzing, observing, comparing and contrasting, predicting, organizing information, researching, discussing
Objectives:	Students will learn to look for signs of insects in a neighborhood environment, learn types of insects, and learn ways to categorize them.
State Goals:	12.B.2a, 12.B.2b, 17.C.2c
Materials:	Insect identification charts/books, paper, pencils, clipboards. Optional: nets, insect containers (old jars; etc.)
Time:	30–45 minutes for classroom preparation and schoolyard exploration.
Vocabulary:	head, thorax, abdomen, proboscis, mandible, ocellus/ocelli, antenna/antennae, entomology, species
Copy Pages:	None

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### Background

Insects belong to a large group of animals called arthropods. They differ from other arthropods (jointed legs and a hard body wall) because insects have 3 main body parts: *head*, *thorax*, and *abdomen*. Most importantly, they have 6 legs. With an insect identification book insects can be identified through many other special features (proboscis, mandibles, compound eyes, simple eyes, and antennae.)

### Preparation

Establish a place where insects can be found near the school yard. If possible, some of the following habitats should be available: a dead tree or branch, leaf litter, rotting material, dirt, compost piles, plants and flowers, bases of buildings, weeds, and ponds. Students should use an insect identification book to learn about common insects that could be found on the school site. Collection jars and nets could be used if

available. Many insects can be examined with a magnifying glass.

### Procedure

1. Ask the students What is an insect? Where could you find insects near our school? What are signs that insects have been present?
2. Establish what an insect is by using the vocabulary words. Introduce common insects through an insect identification book or with pictures on the overhead.
3. Draw the three main parts of an insect to establish understanding.
4. Explain that the exploration on the school grounds will be to find as many different insects as possible. Suggest that the following may be discovered: ants, bees, crickets, butterflies, grasshopper, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, ladybugs, etc.
5. Go out to the designated area, and allow time for exploration. Students may want to collect different insects in a collection jar or

an open plastic bag for classroom identification with magnifying glasses and identification books.

6. In the classroom, have students sketch and describe the insects they collected.

7. For each insect, have them explain why it is indeed an insect.

8. Spend time teaching the students the vocabulary words. There are many activities that can enhance the vocabulary. Just a few choice are listed below.

Make a word puzzle from Internet:  
[www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com).

Draw a picture of each word.

Write out definitions of each word.

Use each word in an “insect”-based sentence.

Write a riddle about each word for a group member to guess.

Discuss the words as a class.

### **Assessment**

Students can journal their findings, and before the site visit they can write six new facts that they have learned about insects. Students can predict what they will find on the site visit.

### **Extensions**

Research project: Internet search about insect