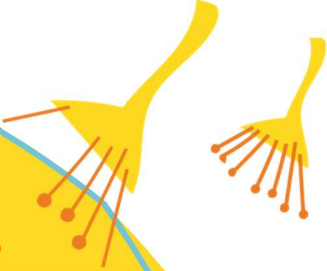





Minibeast Safari Hunt



Praying mantis



Hi junior entomologists! Today we're going on an minibeast safari hunt. We'll be searching high and low for insects. They might be flying through the air, chomping on plants or hiding in logs or under rocks.

Remember, minibeasts are everywhere – they make up almost 75% of the animal kingdom – and each one has a special role in our ecosystem.

Put on your detective cap and see how many minibeasts you can find.





What you will need

Field guide or wildlife identification app

Notepad to record your findings

Hand lens (optional)

Pooter (optional)

Phone/camera (optional)

What to do

1. Start by looking for flying insects like butterflies and bees. How many can you find? Watch the different ways they move through the air. Estimate how fast do you think they move? Why do you think they need to move fast?
2. Look closely at the plants at your site. Can you find any signs that insects may be present (eg. chewed leaves or leaves with holes). Don't forget to look underneath leaves and inside flowers. Does the insect's colour or shape help it stay hidden? Lots of minibeasts are masters of camouflage!
3. Get down on your hands and knees and turn over rocks and look under leaf litter and logs. These are great places for insects to stay out of the sun or hide from predators. What happens when you uncover them? What do you think they eat?

Take care not to step on anything living, and remember to return anything to its original place if you move it.

Watch out for snakes when moving rocks or logs.

Do you have a favourite insect?

Which minibeast was the smallest? Which was the largest? The fastest? The slowest? The best hider?



Minibeast Safari Hunt – Teacher Resource

Suggested Lesson time – 1 lesson, approximately 50 minutes.

This lesson will help students understand more about insects and insect diversity. It can be a standalone lesson or be combined with any other worksheet and lessons in the Habitat Warriors program (for example, linking it to other species with 'Wildlife Detective', or to specific insect habitat with 'What's the Story with Understorey', 'Lovely Leaf Litter' and 'Habitat Assessment').

At the end of this lesson students will:

- Understand more about the various ways to study or collect insects within their school environment
- Understand how insects differ to other small animals (e.g. spiders, snails)
- Be able to use a field guide to identify insects

This lesson can be made suitable for all primary levels – suggestions on how you could 'level up' the lesson are also given, while links to the Victorian Curriculum can provide additional ideas.

Basic Lesson Outline

Introduce insects, explaining what other species they are related to (arthropods), and some features of insects, such as an exoskeleton, segmented body and antennae.

- Ask students to name some familiar insects they see on the school grounds or their planting site.
- What kinds of habitats do insects use? Are insects important to humans? If so, how and why? (such as pollinators, producing honey, etc)
- How do different insects move around (flight, walking, crawling, etc)

Provide students with the 'Minibeast Safari Hunt' worksheet

Explain the practical task

- Only small logs and rocks should be moved; moving larger items disrupts habitat and could be a safety hazard.
 - Organise the class into small groups to undertake the observation task; ensure each group has either a physical field guide, or a suitable app on a tablet.
 - Leave plenty of time for the students to complete the practical task.
- Class discussion
 - Did you find lots of insect habitat at your site?
 - What kinds of habitats had the most insects?
 - What was the most common insect? How did it move?
 - How could the school provide more habitat to support greater insect biodiversity?

Lesson Level Up

There are multiple ways to extend and expand this lesson to make it more comprehensive and/or introduce more complex topics for older children/year levels. For example:

- Expand the English component: Using some of the words in the provided word search, ask students to write a short descriptive text describing insects, and how their bodies differ from some other small creatures, such as spiders. This activity can be altered to suit any primary level.
- Expand the Science component: The Arthropods are the largest animal group on earth. Extend the lesson by introducing the idea of animal classification, using features of species in the Arthropoda. Get students to classify species based on features such as number of legs (arachnids have eight) and/or body segments. How many different groups did the students record during their practical exercise? The complexity of this section could be adjusted depending on year level.

Detailed Curriculum Links

Science			
	Foundation – Level 2	Level 3 – Level 4	Level 5 – Level 6
Science Understanding			
Science as a human endeavour	People use science in their daily lives.	Science knowledge helps people to understand the effects of their actions.	Scientific understandings, discoveries and inventions are used to inform personal and community decisions and to solve problems that directly affect people's lives.
Biological sciences	Living things have a variety of external features and live in different places where their basic needs, including food, water and shelter, are met.	Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things.	Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment
Science Inquiry Skills			
Questioning and Predicting	Respond to and pose questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events.	With guidance, identify questions in familiar contexts that can be investigated scientifically and predict what might happen based on prior knowledge.	With guidance, pose questions to clarify practical problems or inform a scientific investigation, and predict what the findings of an investigation might be based on previous experiences or general rules.

Science			
	Foundation – Level 2	Level 3 – Level 4	Level 5 – Level 6
Planning and conducting	Participate in guided investigations, including making observations using the senses, to explore and answer questions.	Suggest ways to plan and conduct investigations to find answers to questions including consideration of the elements of fair tests.	With guidance, plan appropriate investigation types to answer questions or solve problems and use equipment, technologies and materials safely, identifying potential risks.
		Safely use appropriate materials, tools, equipment and technologies.	
Recording and processing	Use informal measurements in the collection and recording of observations.	Use formal measurements in the collection and recording of observations.	Construct and use a range of representations, including tables and graphs, to record, represent and describe observations, patterns or relationships in data.
	Use a range of methods, including drawings and provided tables, to sort information.	Use a range of methods including tables and column graphs to represent data and to identify patterns and trends.	
Analysing and evaluating	Compare observations and predictions with those of others.	Compare results with predictions, suggesting possible reasons for findings.	Compare data with predictions and use as evidence in developing explanations
			Suggest improvements to the methods used to investigate a question or solve a problem.
Communicating	Represent and communicate observations and ideas about changes in objects and events in a variety of ways.	Represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings to show patterns and relationships using formal and informal scientific language.	Communicate ideas and processes using evidence to develop explanations of events and phenomena and to identify simple cause-and-effect relationships.

English

Language

Phonics and Word Knowledge

Literacy

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Texts in context