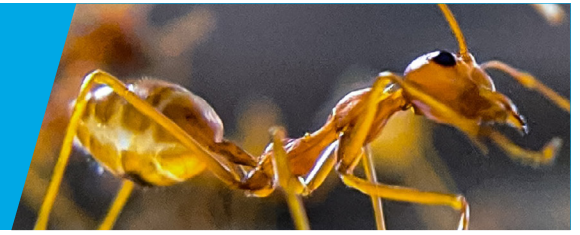


CURIOSITY AT HOME

HOW TO DRAW AN INSECT



Have you ever looked really closely at an insect? You might have noticed that their bodies look very different from our own. In this activity, you will draw a scientific illustration of an insect to gain a better understanding of its body.

MATERIALS

- Science notebook or paper
- Something to write with
- Optional: something to color with (examples: markers, crayons, colored pencils)



PROCEDURE

- Take a look at this picture of an insect above. What do you notice about it? What body parts do you see?
- To help us with observing this insect more closely, follow along to make a scientific illustration.
- The first step to drawing an insect is to sketch out the basic shapes that make it up. For our ant, we will start with two big round shapes that are connected to each other, followed by a small triangle, and then another big round shape. In order from first to last, these big round parts are called the head, thorax, and abdomen. Draw the shapes so that combined they are at least as large as your fist. Drawing a larger picture makes it easier to add details later.
- Next, add the legs. You can draw the ant's legs as lines or you can make them into shapes like very skinny twigs. Notice the places where the legs connect to the body, and where they bend. In this picture, one of the legs is mostly hidden behind the body, but it's peeking out from behind the abdomen.
- Add the antennae, eyes, and mouthparts.
- Are there any more details you'd like to add? Draw them now.
- Color the insect in, if you haven't already been using colors
- If you'd like to, you can label the different body parts.



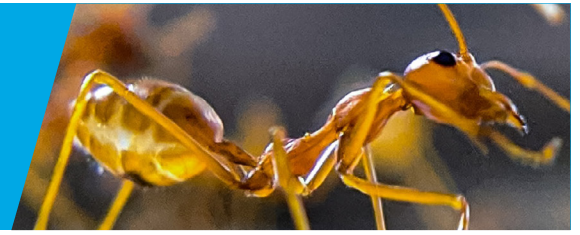
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EXPLORE MORE

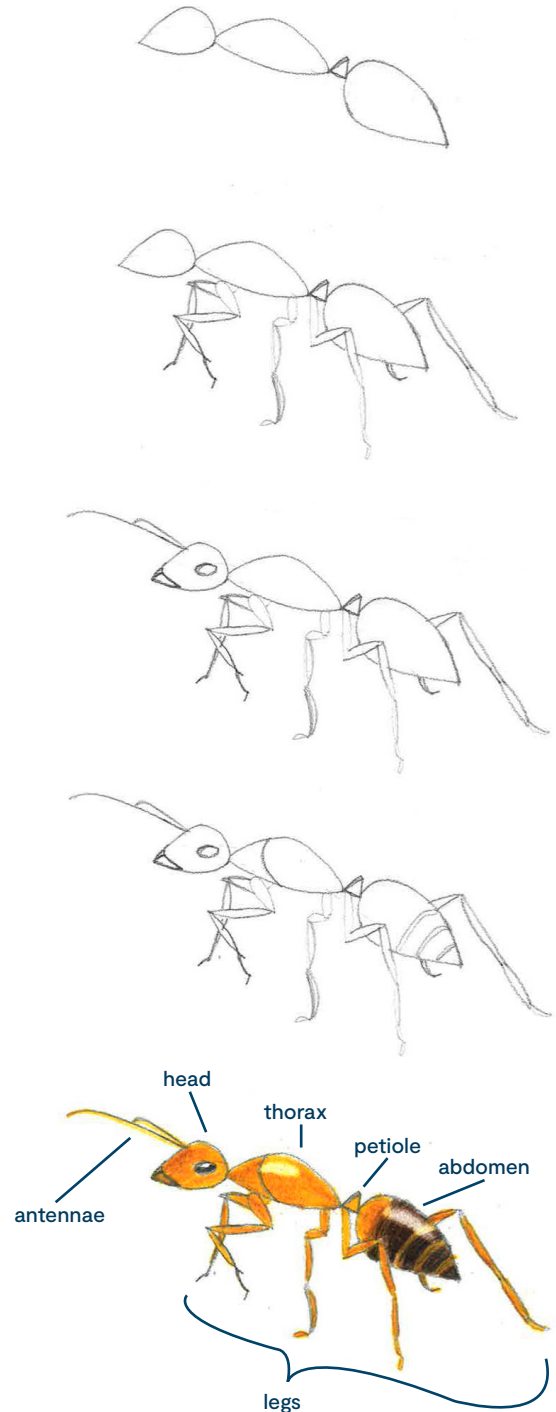
- Find an insect to make live observations of. Try drawing it while it's interacting with its environment. This will be tricky because the insect will be moving around, but it's good practice to draw an animal in movement. It helps if you can find an insect that is currently moving slowly.
- Draw the large parts of your insect first, follow it up with the legs, and then add the facial features and then finally the details.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Even though they look very different from each other, all adult insects have a few structures in common. They all have six legs, and they all have a head, thorax, and abdomen. Insects also always have six legs connected to their thorax. If a creature has more or less legs or body parts, it's not an insect. For example, spiders have two main body parts and eight legs. They are arachnids, not insects.

On different types of insects, these three main body parts may look very different, and may even be tricky to recognize. Especially because sometimes the thorax and abdomen are hidden beneath wings.

Beyond these similarities, insects can look very different from one another. For example, their mouthparts may look very different depending on what type of food they eat.



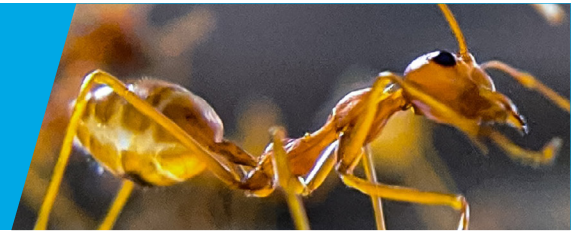
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3–5 GRADE EXPLORATION

Explore the following questions and write your observations in your science notebook.

- In your science notebook, draw a picture of a person. What body parts does a person have that an ant also has? What is different between the two bodies?
- Can you think of any adaptations or special features an ant has on its body that might help it survive? What other adaptations do you notice on different insect bodies? What parts of an ant's body help them to sense information?
- How might an ant's behavior change depending on what it senses in its environment?



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