

# Insects: Bodies, Behavior and Ecosystems

Body parts, colony life, special abilities, pollination, and survival show why small animals deserve close attention.

|              |            |                               |
|--------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| 6 core books | Grades 1-4 | Revised after catalogue audit |
|--------------|------------|-------------------------------|

**You are the teacher.**

You know your students and what they need today. Use what works. Change what doesn't. Make it yours.

## Teaching purpose

Students move from noticing many insects to studying how particular insect bodies and behaviors work. The sequence deliberately avoids duplicating the core of the existing Life Cycles set: it emphasizes classification, colony behavior, insect traits, human attitudes toward bugs, and ecological importance rather than developmental stages.

**Recommended grade band**

Grades 1-4

**The Big Question**

What can an insect's body and behavior tell us about how it lives?

**Source and confidence boundary**

Core title IDs, authors, formats, and reading levels shown here were rechecked against the updated Book\_List.xlsx. Descriptive framing was tightened during this audit; where the catalogue does not provide a reading level, none is invented.

## Before reading

Make two columns: What the insect has, and what the insect does. Keep asking what each feature or behavior helps the animal accomplish.

## Core reading sequence

NOTICE

### Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!

Book ID 4228 · Bob Barner · Non Fiction · Reading level 1.6

**Why it belongs:** An accessible introduction brings many familiar bugs into view and gives young readers language for noticing similarities and differences.

**Unique contribution:** It creates the common observation vocabulary the rest of the set can sharpen.

**Ask Which creatures seem alike at first, and what details help you tell them apart?**

FOLLOW ONE

### Bee

Book ID 8000 · Charlotte Voake · Non Fiction

**Why it belongs:** A curious child follows honeybees into hive life and learns basic details about workers, larvae, the queen, pollen, nectar, and the waggle dance.

**Unique contribution:** It narrows the set from many bugs to one social insect living and working in a colony.

**Ask What does the bee do that makes more sense once you understand the whole hive?**

## Ants Don't Wear Pants

Book ID 7852 · Kevin McCloskey · Non Fiction · Reading level 1.8

**Why it belongs:** A fact-filled, humorous close-up of ant colonies includes unusual senses, movement, and collective life underground.

**Unique contribution:** It adds another social insect while making body structures and colony organization visible.

**Ask Which ant feature would be hardest to understand if you looked at only one ant by itself?**

## Bee & Flea and the Compost Caper (EBook)

Book ID 8350 · Anna Humphrey · E-book · Reading level 3.2

**Why it belongs:** Bee and Flea investigate a chaotic compost heap and discover that the tiny creatures there are doing essential work in the natural cycle of the garden.

**Unique contribution:** It links insects to decomposition, soil, plants, pollination, and the wider ecosystem.

**Ask What changes in Bee's thinking when the compost chaos turns out to have an ecological job?**

Book ID 4695 · Natalie Rompella · Non Fiction

**Why it belongs:** A guide to insects uses photographs and explanatory features to replace a quick disgust response with observation and information.

**Unique contribution:** It makes the reader's attitude part of the inquiry: knowledge changes what we notice before we react.

**Ask What might you miss if your first response is simply to squash the bug?**

Book ID 4222 · Bob Barner · Non Fiction · Reading level 5.3 · Teacher read-aloud

**Why it belongs:** Butterflies are placed in deep time alongside dinosaurs, with pollination and flowering plants connecting insects to a much larger ecological story.

**Unique contribution:** It closes by showing that insects can affect plant life and ecosystems across enormous spans of time.

**Ask How can something as small as a butterfly matter in a story as large as the age of dinosaurs?**

## Optional extensions

### **Burt the Beetle Doesn't Bite! (Graphic Novel)**

Book ID 8397 · Ashley Spires · Graphic Novel · Reading level 2.7

**Why optional:** A strong comic extension for separating real insect abilities from superhero framing; keep it optional because its catalogue grade range reaches above the core band.

### **We Dig Worms!**

Book ID 7883 · Kevin McCloskey

**Why optional:** Useful for the important comparison that worms are small invertebrates but are not insects.

### **Selection note**

The core sequence is limited to six titles so each book has a distinct instructional job. Optional titles should extend the question rather than merely add more books on the same topic.

## Across-the-set teaching moves

1. Sort observations into body structure, behavior, colony role, and ecosystem role.
2. Ask what a feature helps the insect do rather than collecting unusual facts.
3. Separate accurate insect information from anthropomorphic or comic framing.
4. Compare solitary and social examples when the text supports it.
5. Use non-insect extensions to sharpen classification rather than treating every small crawling animal as a bug.

## Book-to-book connections

### **Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! + Bee**

Move from broad noticing to sustained observation of one insect.

### **Ants Don't Wear Pants + Bee & Flea and the Compost Caper**

Compare colony organization with the wider ecological jobs insects and other small organisms perform.

### **Don't Squash that Bug + Dinosaurs Roar, Butterflies Soar!**

Connect careful observation with ecological importance.

## Culminating discussion

Use three books to explain how an insect's body, behavior, or relationship with other living things helps it survive or matter in its environment.

## Teacher look-fors

- Uses specific insect features or behaviors.
- Distinguishes an insect from another small creature when evidence is available.
- Connects a feature to a function.
- Separates factual information from fictional framing.

## Existing-set duplication check

**Closest existing Text Set:** Life Cycles

**What overlaps:** Both collections include insects and science observation.

**Why this set is genuinely different:** Life Cycles studies developmental change over time; this revised set deliberately avoids its core titles and instead studies insect structures, behavior, colony life, and ecosystem roles.

## Production note

This is the repaired post-audit edition. Final coding should preserve these title IDs and recheck live links/covers before deployment.