EarthLearn

Minibeasts and Me:
The invertebrate world all around me

An Introduction

Invertebrates make up an estimated 97% of all animal species on Earth. Defined by the absence of a backbone or spinal column, these remarkable animals inhabit virtually every environment, from gardens, woodlands and freshwater habitats to the deepest parts of the ocean. They have existed for hundreds of millions of years, long before humans appeared, and continue to play a fundamental role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

While some invertebrates, such as octopuses and jellyfish, can grow to impressive sizes, many are small enough to be found in school grounds, parks and local green spaces. These animals are often referred to as "minibeasts", a term that remains familiar in primary education, although scientists increasingly favour the term invertebrates because it better reflects the diversity and scale of this group.

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Minibeasts and Me uses a combination of storytelling, scientific enquiry, and creative communication to inspire young learners to connect with the natural world. Through visual, spoken and written activities, pupils will discover the extraordinary contribution that invertebrates make to life on Earth (especially land-based species) and explore how these animals can help us address environmental challenges when their habitats are protected and valued.

Throughout the programme, learners will investigate what invertebrates are, explore their evolutionary history, examine the vital roles they play in supporting ecosystems, and reflect on their own attitudes towards these, often overlooked, animals. By encouraging curiosity, empathy and environmental responsibility, the programme helps develop children's voice and understanding about how humans and invertebrates can work in partnership to support a healthier and more sustainable planet.

Schools can work individually or collaborate with other local or global school partners.

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The programme consists of 30 x 20-minute activities designed for 7-14-year-olds.

Learners become:

History Detectives: Searching the world for clues about the history of minibeasts on our planet.

Scientists and Data Analysts: Using scientific enquiry to explore vital role minibeasts play in supporting ecosystems.

Innovators and Campaigners: Championing solutions to improve invertebrate biodiversity and wellbeing, now and in the future.

You can use 1 learning activity within an existing lesson plan, add 2-3 together to create a whole lesson, or select several activities tailored to your needs as a short learning programme. (We also provide CPD support to assist with this).