



12. What are minibeasts?

Requirements: [set of minibeast cards](#); set of [land-dwelling minibeast classification cards](#); [card matching answer sheet](#)

7 – 11 years: teacher-led to explore what learners already know, then in pairs or groups of 3 – 5

12 – 14 years: in pairs or groups of 3 – 5

Curriculum: Science (animals and their habitats, classification); English (Oracy)

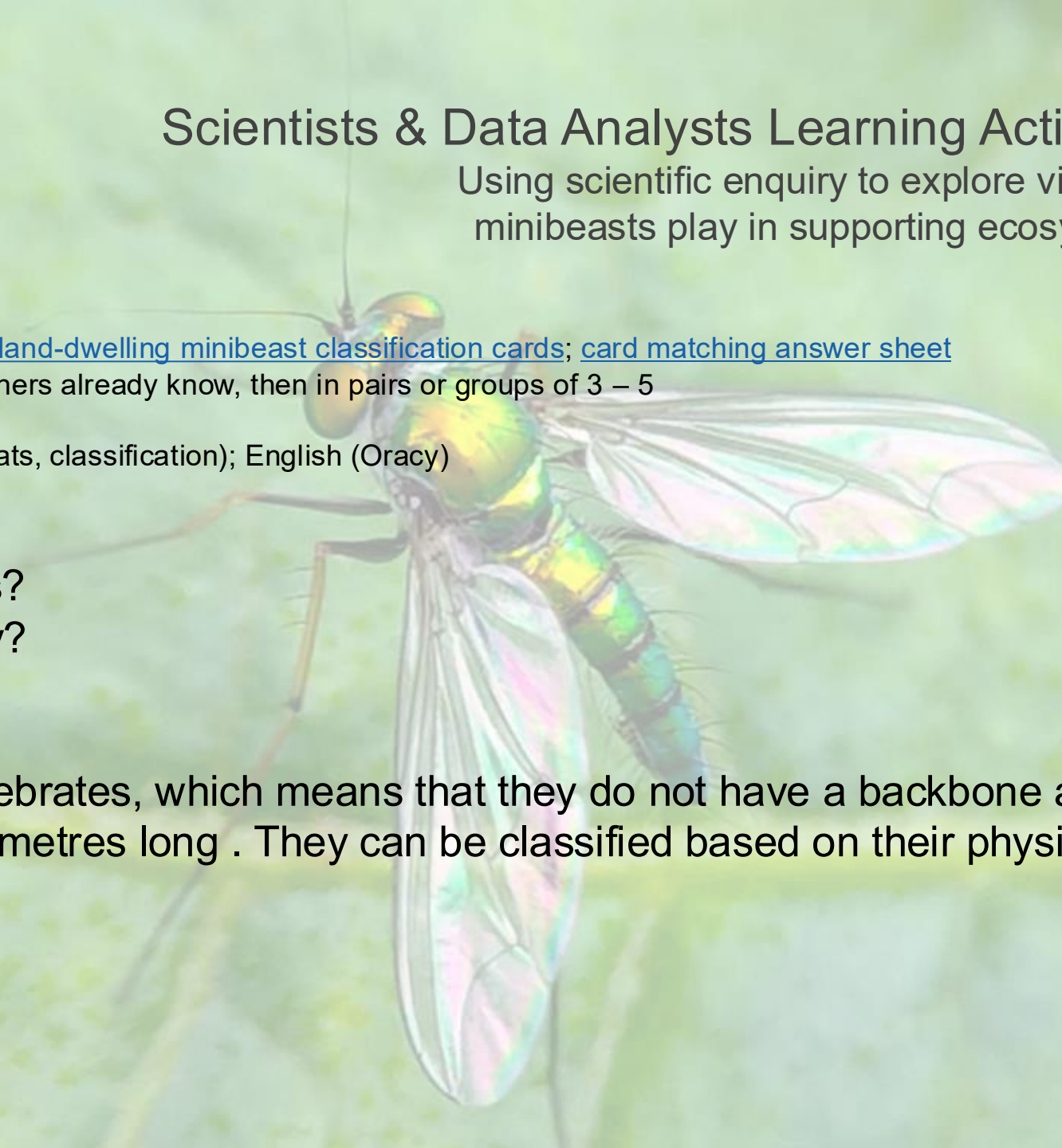
Time: 20 minutes

Why do we call them minibeasts?

What sort of minibeasts are they?

How can you classify them?

Minibeasts are very small invertebrates, which means that they do not have a backbone and are usually less than a few centimetres long . They can be classified based on their physical features.





Choose the minibeasts on your [cards](#) which are land-dwelling. Lay these cards and all the land-dwelling minibeast classification cards out in front of you and your partner or group. Match the minibeast card to the [land-dwelling minibeast classification card](#). Discuss with your partner or group and once you are happy with your matches, check your answers using the [card matching answer sheet](#).

Turn the cards over and play a game of 'pairs'. Each person takes a turn to turn over a pair of cards to see if they match (minibeast to classification). If they match, then they win that pair and they get another go. If they don't match, then the cards must be turned back over for the next person to have a go.

Look again at the minibeast cards. If you wanted to classify a minibeast, what questions could you ask?



Teacher Notes

‘Minibeasts’ is a term that was first used in education about 50 years ago as a friendly term for small land-based and water-based invertebrates. However, it is now becoming less popular with education specialists because it is not scientifically accurate, can be misleading in terms of scale (invertebrates can be large as well as small), and can give the impression that these animals are ‘beastly’ when actually they play critical roles in our ecosystem. Without them we would not exist.

We are using the term, however, as it is an engaging term that helps inspire young learners’ immediate excitement and curiosity.

In this activity, you can explore this issue with pupils and see what they think. All the ‘minibeast’ stories on the learning world map are about animals that share one thing in common - they have no backbone (invertebrates). More than 99% of invertebrates measure less than a few centimetres long (though there are some notable exceptions – past and present).