

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

Investigation 3: Big and Little Worms

Earthworms are often thought of as very lowly and unappealing creatures. But in fact, earthworms are very important creatures in many ways. The tunnels that earthworms make help keep soil loose, and make growing conditions better for garden plants. Water can travel through the soil better, and plants can grow their roots deeper.

To learn more about earthworms, have your child cut out the questions and answers below. Read aloud all of the questions, then read each answer and work together to decide which question it answers. Have your child glue the questions and answers on another sheet of paper, matching each answer to its question.

Q: How big can earthworms get?

A: As earthworms burrow, they produce a covering of mucus. This helps them move through the soil. As the mucus is rubbed off, it cements the walls of the tunnel. The mucus also helps the earthworm slip away from animals that would like to eat it for dinner.

Q: Why are earthworms so moist?

A: Earthworms don't have eyes, but they are sensitive to light.

Q: How do earthworms breathe?

A: The smallest earthworm is barely 2 centimeters long (less than an inch). One of the largest is a 2.5 meter giant that lives in Australia (that's about 100 inches).

Q: Do earthworms really eat dirt?

A: As earthworms make their tunnels through the soil, they take in food that is mixed with dirt. Some of the sand in the soil acts as grinding stones in the worm's gizzard. The soil that is not good for food passes through the earthworm. It is left behind as a casting.

Q: How do earthworms see?

A: Worms need to breathe, just like people, but they don't have noses. The air goes right through their skin.