INVERTEBRATE ACTIVITIES

Science, Maths, Literacy and Art — KS2

Resources: small magnifying bug pots or yogurt pots, white sheet, chalk, ID card, maths sheet attached

Some different activities to complete after you have collected invertebrates from different habitats around your playground or local area.

WHERE TO FIND INVERTEBRATES

UNDER LOGS, IN DEAD LEAVES OR IN SOIL/COMPOST

If you do not have access to an area of woodland you could create this habitat by putting a log pile in a flower bed or a shaded area of soil (e.g. under a tree). You will have most success finding invertebrates in spring and autumn when the ground is more likely to be damp and not too cold.
Ensure that if children do disturb the habitat that they return it to how it was when they started, e.g. turning logs back over.

IN TREES

Put a white sheet under a branch and shake the branch (be careful not to damage it). See which invertebrates fall onto the sheet. Make sure children don't stand or kneel on the sheet when looking for animals. This is best done in the summer months.
You may find some animals with wings, observe these but don't put them into the small pots.

BRIGHT COLOURS

Many insects are attracted to bright colours. Put our some laminated sheets of brightly coloured cards and see if any invertebrates land on it.

SCIENCE

Identify the invertebrates found using a key and sort them into groups based on similar characteristics, e.g. number of legs or what they eat.
The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) website has lots of interesting information.

Do a scientific drawing of an invertebrate and label its body parts, e.g. segments, antennae, tentacles etc.

Find out what feeding group the animal is in. What are its predators or prey? Arrange the invertebrates found into a food chain using sticks to make arrows to show the flow of energy or chalk to draw these.

Play guessing games using the invertebrate that has been found;

1. Children take it in turns to describe their invertebrate using scientific language and the other children have to guess what it is. Who can guess the invertebrate with the fewest clues?
2. Get the group to play 20 questions, with only a yes or no allowed as an answer. e.g. Does it have tentacles? Does it have 3 parts to its body? How many questions does it take to find out the type of invertebrate?

LITERACY

Imagine you have just discovered a new species, write a detailed description of it using correct scientific vocabulary.

Have fun using alliterations to describe your invertebrate, e.g.
One wiggly worm
Two slithering slugs
Three beautiful butterlies
Can you make up a collective noun for your invertebrate, e.g.
A lawn of wiggly worms
A pile of slithering slugs
A dance of beautiful butterflies
This could then be used to create poems, a recipe or in creative writing.

Write a diary entry for a 'day in the life of' one of the invertebrates found. What were the dangers encountered, how did it find its food?

ART

Create a piece of art using natural materials inspired by the artist Andy Goldsworthy. You could focus on symmetry or it could be a 2D or 3D shape.

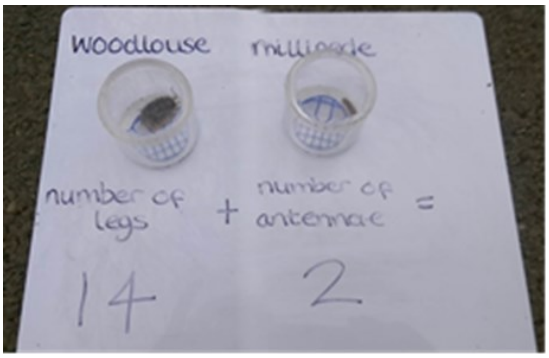

MATHS

Use the sheet below to do some invertebrate maths;
e.g. number of beetle legs x number of woodlouse legs = ?
Older pupils could try some equations;
2(woodlice antennae) + 3(ant legs) = ?

You could use chalk to write the calculations on the playground.

Animal Detectives

Name of animal	Number of body parts	Number of legs	Number of antennae/ tentacles
Ant 	3	6	2
Ground beetle 	3	6	2
Earwig 	3	6	2
Spider 	2	8	0
Woodlouse 	14	14	2
Millipede 	9 (but can have up to 200)	36 (but can have up to 400)	2
Centipede 	15 (but can have up to 167)	30 (but can have up to 354)	2
Slug 	1	0	4
Snail 	2	0	4
Earthworm 	100 (but can have up to 150)	0	0



Collect information about the animals found, e.g. number of legs or colour and record in a simple table using a tally. Put the data collected into a simple graph.

Colour of animal	Tally
black	
brown	
red	
green	
pink