

Animals of the World: Insects



THE BEETLE



Beetles are insects with hard shells and wings that allow them to fly short distances. Throughout the world, there are 375,000 species registered beetles.

They are good at adapting and can live anywhere in the world, except for places with cold temperatures. Beetles are found in almost all caves, swamps, forests, deserts, and meadows on Earth. Its favorite habitat is areas with an accumulation of organic waste and herbs to eat.

Beetles are ancient animals that have been on earth for 270 million years. They lived during the Permian Period, just before the appearance of dinosaurs. Amazing right!

Beetles can be a variety of colors depending on its species. There are completely black beetles and others as bright green as jade stone. The vast majority of beetles are brown. Like many insects, beetles have six legs, three on each side of its body. The legs of these insects are adapted to their habitat: some use them to climb trees, while others use them to dig in the ground. Its body is divided into three main parts: the head, the thorax, and the abdomen. They also have antennae on their heads that function as an olfactory apparatus which helps it search for food and detect potential predators.



The vast majority of beetles are herbivores; that is, they feed on plants and fungi. There are carnivorous beetles, which have bigger and stronger hips to be able to eat snails and other insects. Others prefer to feed on dead animals.

When a female beetle and a male beetle mate, they lay several eggs in wood, plants, in the ground, and even in the water. Some species of beetles lay a dozen eggs, while others lay thousands of eggs.



One of the most well-known beetles is the ladybug. Ladybugs are a multitude of bright colors; red with black dots is the most popular. They help fight pests and feed on aphids.

One of the three largest beetles in the world is the Hercules beetle. The males of this species have two horns. It uses its strong head to fight against other males and to attract the females of the species. The horns of some Hercules beetles are longer than its body. The length of its horns and body can be 17 cm long. They live in the jungles and tropical forests of South America and Central America.

Another interesting beetle is the dung beetle. It uses excrement to protect and feed its young. This beetle locates the excrement of another animal and then uses its legs to roll it into a ball to carry to its young. Sometimes, the excrement ball is so large that two dung beetles have to push it.



Name _____

Date _____



THE BEETLE



Answer the questions.

1. Beetles use their wings to go short distances when _____.

- a. flying
- b. walking
- c. swimming
- d. jumping
- e. crawling
- f. climbing

2. Beetles usually live in _____.

- a. caves, marshes, rivers, deserts, and meadows.
- b. caves, swamps, forests, deserts, and meadows.
- c. big nests made of dirt.
- d. large groups, with a leader who gives the orders.

3. Beetles lived on Earth during the Permian period, just before the appearance of dinosaurs.

- a. True
- b. False

4. What do beetles use their legs for?

- a. to climb trees
- b. to dig in the earth
- c. to move around
- d. All the answers are correct.

5. Most beetles are carnivorous.

- a. True
- b. False



Name_____

Date_____

6. Beetles use their antennas to_____

- a. detect potential predators.
- b. eat, break wood, or move heavy objects.
- c. look for food.
- d. move to new places.



7. When beetles mate, they_____

- a. lay their eggs in nests.
- b. lay two eggs.
- c. lay their eggs in various places, such as wood, soil, or water.
- d. hide the eggs under their abdomen to protect them from predators.

8. Ladybugs are a type of beetle that are _____

- a. important because they protect farms from aphids.
- b. giant black and white color.
- c. tiny and only found in the rainforests of South America.
- d. baseball players.

9. The Hercules Beetle _____

- a. drags huge balls of feces to feed its young.
- b. has two strong legs to drag its young.
- c. has two huge horns to fight against other males.
- d. is covered with bright colors, specifically red with black dots.

10. Look at the arrows and write the words given in the correct order for the lifecycle of a beetle.

LARVA - EGG - ADULT - PUPA

