

**Project FOCUS
Best Lessons
THIRD GRADE**

Title of Lesson: Mealworm Habitats

Theme: Life Science

Unit Number: Unit Title: Habitats of Georgia

Performance Standard(s) Covered (enter code):

S3L1. Students will investigate the habitats of different organisms and the dependence of organisms on their habitat.

c. Identify features of animals that allow them to live and thrive in different regions of Georgia.

d. Explain what will happen to an organism if the habitat is changed.

Enduring Standards (objectives of activity):

Habits of Mind

- Asks questions
- Uses numbers to quantify
- Works in a group
- Uses tools to measure and view
- Looks at how parts of things are needed
- Describes and compares using physical attributes
- Observes using senses
- Draws and describes observations

Content (key terms and topics covered):

Habitat
Survive
Reproduce

Learning Activity (Description in Steps)

Abstract (limit 100 characters): Students will examine the habitat and basic needs of meal worms over several class periods.

Details:

Before the first lab, poke air holes in the lids of the containers. You will also need to cut your fruit or vegetable into small slices (unless you use baby carrots). Write AIR, FOOD, WATER, and SHELTER on the note cards.

Assign the students to groups of four. Using the notecards, assign each student a responsibility for assembling the habitat. Have one student come up and get each component of the habitat. Explain that the fruit or vegetable is made mostly of water, so it serves the purpose of providing the mealworms with water. Tell the students you will have to change the vegetables out every week, or else they would dry out and the worms would have no water.

After the habitats are assembled, add 10 meal worms to each.

During following labs, you explain the life cycle of the meal worm. Then can dump out the oatmeal onto a large sheet of paper and have the students sort through it to count the larvae, pupas,

and adult beetles. Explain that the meal worms will shed their exoskeleton during their larva stage. The pupas will be small, firm, and a lighter color. They will not move or eat. The beetles will be lighter in color at first, but will gradually darken with age.

Each time the students investigate their meal worm habitats, they should record their observations. Have the students consider each part of the habitat, why the meal worms need these things, and what would happen if they did not have them.

Materials Needed (Type and Quantity):

- Mealworms (available at a petstore, 50 for \$3.00)
- Containers with lids (disposable Gladware) - 1 per group of 4 students
- Moist fruit or vegetable (apples, baby carrots, etc.)
- Oatmeal, cornmeal, or whole wheat flour
- Large construction paper or newspaper
- Optional: journals
- Optional: magnifying glasses

Notes and Tips (suggested changes, alternative methods, cautions):

Note: Have the students wash their hands after handling the mealworms.

Sources/References:

- 1) Originally submitted by Melissa Woodson, edited by Jessica Valle (2010)
- 2)
- 3)