

Lesson 5

RED WIGGLERS



TEACHER'S PREVIEW

Grade Level

K-I

Learning

Science

Outcomes

1. Describe the appearance and behaviour of a variety of animals.
2. Determine the requirements of healthy animals.
3. Identify the stages in the life cycle of a plant or animal.
4. Demonstrate how plants and other organic material can be recycled back into the environment.
5. Collaborate with others in the care of an animal.

Environmental Message

Worm composting improves soil and reduces waste.

Important Vocabulary

compost	egg	organic	worm bin
life cycle	red wiggler	habitat	castings

Equipment and Material

Shovel

Pictures or magazines to cut and paste

An example of fruit or vegetable waste (e.g., a banana peel)

A sample of finished compost

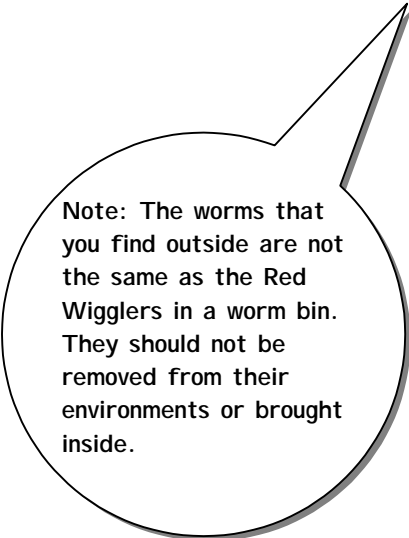
Teaching aids: "Meet a Worm" and "Worm Composting" (included)

Option: Worm composting bins can be built at Delta Recycling Society and taken to classroom

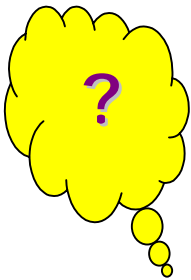


1. INTRODUCTION

Worm Hunt

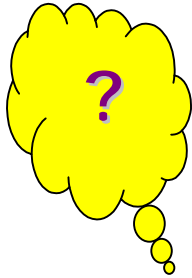


Note: The worms that you find outside are not the same as the Red Wigglers in a worm bin. They should not be removed from their environments or brought inside.



- A. Ask the children to describe a worm.
- B. Draw a picture of a worm based on their description.
 - * Where can you find worms?
 - * Is it good to find worms in your garden? (yes)
 - * Why? (worms help the soil)
- C. Take the children outside for a Worm Hunt.
- D. Ask the children where you should look for worms.
- E. Dig where they suggest to see if you can find any.
- F. Ask the children what they notice about the worms they find: size, colour, etc.
 - * What kinds of places did you find worms?
 - * What were the worms doing? (They wiggle and squiggle.)
 - * Do worms like lights? (No, they wiggle and squirm to get out of the sun because sunshine dries out their skin which can kill them. This also limits their ability to breathe, since they breathe through their skin.)
 - * Where do worms live? (In the soil where it is dark.)
 - * What job do they do? (Help decompose organics, make compost.)
 - * Describe the worms you saw: how big, what colour, how did they move, did they move, did they have eyes, arms and legs.
 - * Why might worms not have eyes? (They live where it is always dark.)
 - * Review your worm picture – do the students want to add or change anything?

Red Wiggler Life Cycle



- A. Red Wigglers are special worms that help us compost. They thrive in cow manure.
- B. Review the life cycle of a red wiggler. (Refer to Teaching Aid "Meet a Worm").
- C. A worm bin is a special home for worms which people use to help make compost.
 - * What things do worms need to live that would have to be put in a worm bin? (Answer: air, bedding (like newspaper or leaves) and food and water!)
 - * What do worms like to eat? (Fresh fruit and vegetable waste.)
 - * Can we put fruit and vegetables in our blue box? Blue bag? Yellow bag? (no)
 - * What could we do with them? (Compost or feed the worms.)
 - * Show a jar of finished compost. What is this?
- D. Worms can turn this (banana peel) into this (compost).

2. PRACTICE

What's for lunch?

- A. Ask the children to pretend that they're worms living in a worm bin.
- B. Ask them what's for lunch? (Suggestions: give them two or three choices. For example, would they like a hamburger, some lettuce or a pencil? Pictures could also be used to illustrate the choices.)

3. ASSIGNMENT

Pet Worm Posters

- A. Have the children draw a worm bin and then "feed" it by gluing on pictures of things worms like to eat.
- B. Ask the children to give their worms a name.

4. SHARING

- A. Display the Pet Worm Posters in the classroom.
- B. Adopt a worm bin to care for in the classroom. Children can work together caring for the worms over the school year. Delta Recycling Society can help your class start a worm bin.

5. CLOSURE

- * How do worms help the environment? (They eat fruit and vegetable waste and make compost.)
- * Can we help too? (Yes, by composting at home.)
- * What are two ways to compost at home? (A worm bin, a backyard composter.)

6. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Visit Delta Recycling Society's Earthwise Garden.

The *Worm Watchers* Eco-Tour offers two options for worm bin demonstrations. Teachers have the option to take the worm bin to the classroom for the school year.

7. SUPPORT DOCUMENTS


'No Time to Waste' a GVRD publication for the Elementary Education Program

'Guide to Worm Composting' GVRD 1993

'Worms Eat My Garbage' Mary Appelhof. Kalamazoo: Flower Press, 1982



Environmental Awareness Lesson Jointly Developed by:

 Delta Recycling Society and the Delta School District