

Lesson 1 Rainforest minibeasts

Resources and preparation

- Before the lesson, arrange for the children to go on a minibeast hunt in their local environment to find insects, millipedes, centipedes, woodlice, snails and slugs.
 - Each child or small group will need: a photocopy of page 29, coloured pencils, scissors, glue and/or Blu-Tack®.
 - For the Extension you will need a plastic tank or large sweet jar with a muslin top. Place in it leafy privet twigs in a small pot of water, and about half a dozen stick insects.
- You will also need information on stick insect care.

What to do

- Remind the children of their minibeast hunt and talk about the animals they found. They may have seen millipedes, but centipedes are more difficult to see as they soon rush off when they are disturbed.
- Tell the children that some of these kinds of animals are also found in rainforests, but the individuals are a little different.
- Issue the photocopiable sheet and give the children time to realise that the animals are much larger than those in the local environment.
- Ask the children how they can tell a centipede from a millipede, a leech from a beetle and so on. Go on to tell the children that the centipede has a brown body with yellow legs, the millipede is black with grey

legs, the ants and leech are brown and the beetle is black.

- Tell the children that after they have coloured and cut out the animals, they can stick them on the walls of their classroom rainforest, among the leaves and tree trunks. Explain that the praying mantis needs to be camouflaged if it is not to be seen by its prey, and ask the children to consider where they will stick the animal (steer them to popping its head over a leaf). They may like to join together to stick all the army ants in one or two parallel lines to show how they march up a tree trunk.

Extension

Tell the children that they can keep insects similar to a praying mantis in the classroom. These creatures are called stick insects and are not predators, but feed on privet. Stick insects live in forests, including rainforests in Asia. The stick insect kept in schools is usually the Indian stick insect, which lives in forests in India. When the stick insects are fully grown they produce eggs (without fertilisation – a zoological oddity!) The eggs can be distinguished from the droppings as they are small shiny barrel shapes with a white cap. If the eggs are placed in a plastic box containing a little leaf mould they may hatch after a few weeks. Let the children learn how to care for them.

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Objectives

- To compare the local environment with the rainforest environment.
- To learn how to care for a living thing.

Subject references

Science

- Group living things according to observable similarities and differences. (NC: KSI Sc2 4b)
 - Find out about animals in the local environment. (NC: KSI Sc2 5a)
- #### PSHE and citizenship
- Take and share responsibility (by looking after pets). (NC: KSI 5a)



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