

## Insect Hunt

**Materials:** Butterfly nets, buckets, small containers or bug jars, magnifying glasses, insect identification guide, drawing pads, pencils

**Procedure: (Direct Experience)** During the insect hunt the goal is to gently catch and observe different insects in different environments. This allows students to see patterns in insect habitats, and observe the anatomy of the many different types of insects, spiders, flies and beetles found.

**1) Collecting:** Butterfly nets are useful tools for catching flying insects but are not suitable for insects on the ground. Buckets are very efficient aids for catching insects on the ground or in long grass. You can capture hundreds of insects by simply dragging a bucket through long grass while running. Another great way to look for insects is by moving things that have been on the ground for a long time such as rolling over a log. Insects can be found everywhere, so try doing this in different environments.

**2) Observing:** Once a student has caught an insect that they wish to observe, they can place it into a small container with breathing holes. Students can try to identify their insects using an identification guide or recording their observations on the paper provided. If they wish they can draw their insect while they have it in the container. Once a student has finished observing their insect, have them release it.

### Hints, tips and tricks:

- A warm sunny day is best, to allow students to see different insects up close.
- Because we take field guides with us that have lots of photos, students can often identify their insects with little to no help and keep in mind that correct identification is not the goal, discover is! Observing insects is a great time to be thoroughly confused. Why the heck does this insect have a hard shell, what are those giant back legs for, why is that bug shaped like a thorn? This is why drawing and photos in field guides are helpful, but remember- confusion is ok!
- As a teacher, lead by example, and get down in the grass with students. Roll on your back, in the field, and watch the insects move around you. It's a great time to talk about camouflage, adaptation, and specialization. Insects are incredibly designed and it is a wonderful opportunity to let students test their ability to develop a hypothesis.