

Wild Discoveries - Mound Ant Behavior

Science Inquiry and Observation

Objectives: Students will learn to observe ants, take notes, ask and answer questions, compare and contrast information and observations. This activity is for warm, dry weather only.

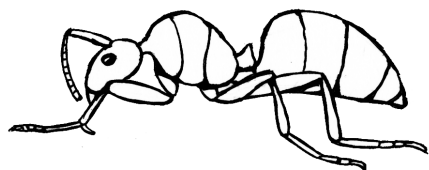
Materials: Sheet with questions on clipboard, pencil, drawing ant sheet

Procedure: Look for a sunny place with cracked sidewalks where pavement ants are working small mounds. They are aggressive with each other, but won't bother people unless harassed, so are a good species to observe.

1. Have students look up and read about mound ants.
2. Provide students with paper and clipboards. Tell them not to touch or interfere with the ants, just to watch them and see what they are doing. Ask them to look for the answers to the following questions:
 - Are the ants leaving or entering the ant mounds? (Or both?)
 - Are they carrying anything? What?
 - Are they paying any attention to each other?
 - Are they paying attention to you?
3. Have students make a field drawing of the ants. Field drawings are an important tool for science research. They help remind researchers about the movement, interactions and behavior of a species. Practicing field drawings is a science lesson that also incorporates art and motor skill development.
4. Ask students to think about questions they have about the ants, what they observe them doing, and their lives in and out of their nests.
5. Back in the classroom, discuss the students' observations and questions as a class.

Discussion:

Ask students to talk about what they observed. This is a good time to talk about the difference between observation and inference. Explain what they actually see is an observation: the color, number, shape and actions of the ants. But anything they "think" is going on – a conclusion – that they don't actually see, is an inference. For example, if you see an ant that is missing a leg. You can observe that the leg is missing, but you cannot say how it was lost unless you witness the event. It also is a good idea to explain to students about not assigning human characteristics to animals (anthropomorphizing): e.g. an ant that carries a dead ant into the ant hill is not necessarily carrying it home for a funeral!



Wild Facts

There are more species of insects on Earth than all other kinds of creatures combined – over 900,000 known species. More than 9,000 of those are different species of ants.



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Mound ants are found in eastern and southern North America. They are originally from Europe, but were brought to North America with the settlers. They build their nests below cracks in the sidewalk or in stone covered areas. They do not like intruders and will attack other ants (or any species, including human) that bother their nests. They are often found hovering near tubular flowers collecting nectar. They are scavengers and will eat anything they can find, including plant materials like pollen, nectar and sap. Mound ants start as tiny worm-like larvae, grow larger and larger and finally pupate and go through a metamorphosis into their adult form. They go through a “*complete metamorphosis*.”

Objectives: Observe ants, take notes about what you see, record any questions you have and answer the ones below, compare and contrast information and observations with other students.

Procedure: Look for a sunny place with cracked sidewalks where pavement ants are working small mounds. They are aggressive with each other, but won't bother people unless harassed. Do not touch or interfere with them, just watch and see what they are doing. Answer the following questions.

1) Are the ants leaving or entering the ant mounds? (Or both?) _____

2) Are they carrying anything? What? _____

3) Are they paying any attention to each other? _____

4) Are they paying attention to you? _____

Name: _____



Read and React - 10 Short Answers - Mound Ants
Science Inquiry and Observation

Mound ants are found in _____ and _____

North America. They are originally from _____, but were brought to North

America with the settlers. They build their _____ below cracks in the sidewalk or in

stone covered areas. They do not like intruders and will _____ other ants

(or any species, including human) that bother their nests. They are often found hovering near tubular flowers

collecting _____. They are _____

and will eat anything they can find, including plant materials like pollen, nectar and sap. Mound ants start as

tiny worm-like _____, grow larger and larger and finally pupate and go

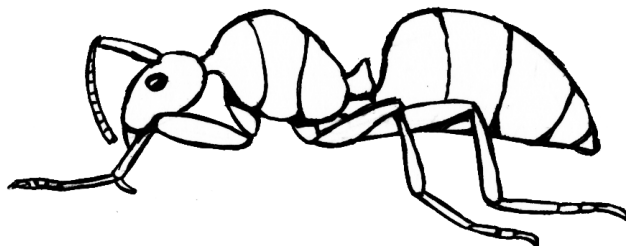
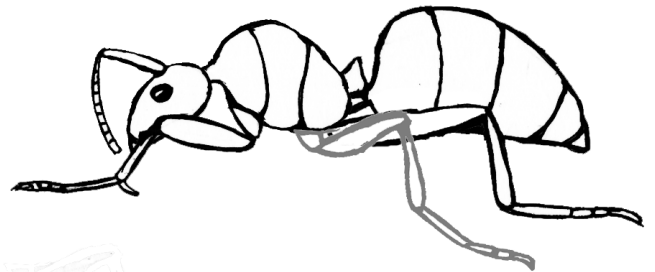
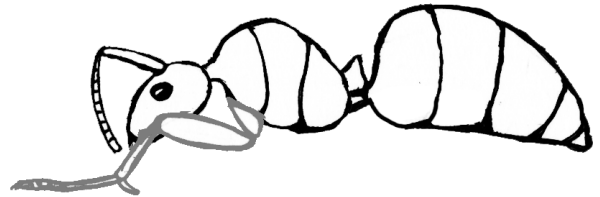
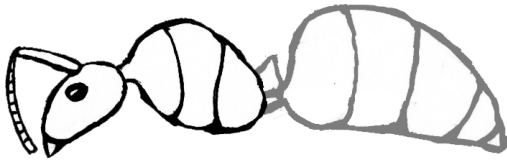
through a metamorphosis into their adult form. They go through a “_____

metamorphosis.”

Draw an ant and label its basic body parts:

Wild Close Up - Draw a Mound Ant

Follow the step by step directions below to draw a Mound Ant (also called pavement ants).



Mound or Field Ant

Formica exsectoides

