



Minibeasts and Leaves

Discover woodlice

Age: 7-14

Topic: Biology

Time: 1 hour

What should learners already know?

- Woodlice are minibeasts.

What equipment will I need?

- Woodlice
- Magnifying glass
- Jar with low edges or a bug pot

How will learners explore this?

1. Go out and look for woodlice. Collect some in a jar or in a bug pot and encourage children to examine them really carefully.
2. Can children answer the following questions:
 - Can you see if it has any eyes?
 - How many legs does your woodlouse have?
 - If you let the woodlouse crawl on your hand, does it feel the same on the palm of your hand as on the top of your hand?
 - What does it do if you try to block its path?
 - Do all the woodlice you found look the same?
3. Ask children whether they think the woodlouse is a disgusting animal or a favourite animal for them.
4. Ask them to explain why this is; have any children changed their mind while interacting with the woodlice today?
5. Make sure to put the woodlice back where you found them at the end of the activity!

How can we show the learning?

- Ask the children to describe the behaviour of the woodlouse they interacted with. Did all the woodlice behave in a similar way when crawling on children's hands?
- Use this as a time to discuss what is unique about woodlice with the class:
 - Woodlice are crustaceans and are some of the oldest animals on earth. They are decomposers and are found almost everywhere where it is dark and damp.
 - At the back end of the underside of a woodlouse are the respiratory organs, the gills. They look like white dots.
 - When the female has been fertilized, a sac is formed on the stomach. In this bladder the eggs are stored in a humid environment. When they hatch, the bladder dries and the little bright babies crawl out.
 - As they grow, they shed their skins.



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