

In A Grasshopper's World

Grasshopper Observations and Questions

Whenever possible, encourage children to become leaders in their own discovery and learning process. What do they want to know about grasshoppers? How can they find out the answers to their questions? Give them time to simply observe the grasshoppers, without set instructions. This will allow them to generate their own questions.

You may use the following questions to help focus their investigations. With very young children, you may want to encourage them to focus on one observational objective each day. This may help keep them from feeling overwhelmed.

Body Structure: Begin with the basic appearance of a grasshopper. What do you notice? Count the legs. Count the antennae. How can you tell if it has wings? Describe its eyes. How big is its mouth? Sketch a grasshopper with a pencil.

Color: Look at the colors of a grasshopper. Describe the colors you see. Compare the colors of this grasshopper to another grasshopper. Find something in your classroom with similar colors. Use crayons or colored pencils to draw a grasshopper.

Size: Explore the sizes of the grasshoppers. Compare them to the length of your finger. What are the results? Find something in your classroom that is about as long as one of the grasshoppers. Use your finger to estimate the size of one grasshopper. Create an actual-size sketch of the grasshopper. Use your finger to check your sketch.

Movement: Examine the movement of a grasshopper. Describe the way its mouth moves. Describe the way it walks, hops, or stays still. Describe what it does with its antennae.

Behavior: Observe the behavior of the grasshoppers. What are their habits? Compare the grasshoppers to each other. Is one more or less active? Why would this happen?

Sounds: Listen for grasshopper sounds while they sit, eat, and move. What do you hear? Describe the sounds.

Food Preferences: Try giving the grasshoppers different plants. Keep track of the plants the grasshoppers seem to eat and the plants they do not. Make predictions about new foods. Tell why.

Imagine: Imagine if you were a grasshopper. What would it be like? How would you see the world?



Terrarium Preparation and Care



Use a large terrarium, the bigger the better, as a larger space will allow grasshoppers to show off their hopping skills. Place the terrarium in an area of your classroom that is away from drafts and direct sunlight. It should not get too hot or too cold. It should have a secure lid that is well ventilated with a screen mesh material. During the day, shine a desk lamp on one side of the terrarium for added warmth. Turn this on and off at the start and end of each school day.

Inside the terrarium, line the bottom with sand or dirt. Prepare a container for moist food. Acquire food for the grasshoppers before their arrival. Provide both moist greens (grasses and vegetables) and dry food (grass seeds, oatmeal or wheat bran.) Clean out the uneaten wet food daily. Keep the terrarium environment dry rather than moist.