

The Working Tools of Insects

4th Grade Nonfiction

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Insects are wonderful. You need to look closely to learn about them. If you watch them, you will learn a lot.

I wonder if you know that the smallest insects you see about you all have tools that were given to them with which they do their work. There is a little fly called a sawfly, because it has a saw to work with. It is really a much nicer saw than you could make, if you were ever so bold.

The fly uses it to make places where the eggs will be safe. What is even more strange is that it has a sort of homemade glue that fastens them where they are laid.

Some insects have cutting instruments that work just as your scissors do. The poppy-bee is one of them, whose work is wonderful. This bee has a boring tool, too. Its nest is usually made in old wood. This borer cleans out the nest to make it ready for use.

When all is ready the insect cuts out pieces of leaves to line the nest and to make the cells. These linings are cut out in the shape of the nest. You would be surprised to see the care taken to have every piece of leaf cut so that it is just the right size, so that it will fit just perfectly. When they are fitted, the pieces are nicely fastened together and put into the nest.

Other animals have tools, too. For example, birds have bills or beaks. They use them to get food. A woodpecker uses its bill to drill into trees. And then the woodpecker gets food. The woodpecker eats insects. So one of the other tools insects need is a way to escape. Some fly, some crawl. They're all part of nature.

Analyze and Infer Author's Point of View and Purpose - Nonfiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. How do you think the writer feels about insects?

- a. He hates them.
- b. He likes them.
- c. He likes birds better.
- d. He does not care about them.

3. Why does the writer tell about the woodpecker?

- a. because it is better than insects
- b. so you know that animals have tools
- c. so you know that they eat insects
- d. to show how animals are different

2. Why does the writer tell about the poppy-bee?

- a. so you know what it is
- b. so you learn how they make nests
- c. to show they are smart
- d. to show that insects have tools

4. What might the writer say about nature?

- a. It is dangerous.
- b. It is wonderful.
- c. It is everywhere.
- d. It is what you should learn.

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Why do you think the writer wrote this passage?*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	d	b	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.
To help interest people in nature.