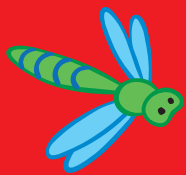
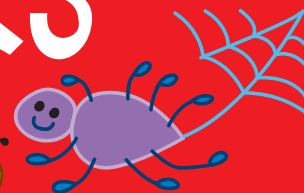


# INSECTS & SPIDERS



## THEME BOX



### Designed to meet these objectives:

- Students will listen attentively and respond to instructions.
- Students will use oral language to describe objects and experiences.
- Students will learn new words and expand vocabulary.
- Students will isolate and identify beginning sounds.
- Students will recognize syllables in words.
- Students will count concrete objects.
- Students will compare sizes.
- Students will create and extend simple patterns.
- Students will use manipulatives to solve addition and subtraction problems.
- Students will sort objects by various attributes.
- Students will use tools to make scientific observations.
- Students will learn about insects and spiders.
- Students will develop gross and fine motor skills.

Your new Insects & Spiders Theme Box has everything you need for comprehensive, hands-on lessons that span the curriculum. We've included a wide variety of props and manipulatives that help children learn about creatures that creep, crawl, and fly. Inside this guide, you'll find ideas for dozens of involving, themed activities covering 10 cross-curricular learning areas—from math to dramatic play. We've even included a list of terrific children's books to build up your classroom library. The Insects & Spiders Theme Box is a perfect way to capture children's attention and boost essential skills!

### What's Included

- 6 bug sponge stampers
- Large and small bugs with storage tub
- 10 photo cards
- 36 spider counters with storage tub
- 4 activity cards
- Bug habitat bucket with tweezers
- Set of 4 magnifiers
- 2 bug graspers





## Science

- Use the bug graspers to capture insects. Place them in the bug habitat and observe with the magnifiers. Be sure to release them back outside after observing them for a short time.
- Go outside early in the day and look for spiderwebs. (Morning dew makes them easier to spot.) Observe and compare their shapes and designs.
- Discuss some of the things that insects create. For example, bees make honey and wax; wasps make papery nests; spiders make webs; and moth larvae (such as silkworms) spin cocoons.
- Why don't spiders get trapped in their own webs? Explain that spiders actually spin two types of silk threads to make their webs. First, the spider spins strong, non-sticky threads to form a framework for the web. Then it adds sticky, stretchy strands to trap insects. The spider must be careful not to walk on the sticky threads! Use the magnifiers to observe a spiderweb up close and see if you can spot both types of threads.
- Using the plastic insects and spiders as models, discuss the differences between insects and spiders. Point out that insects have six legs and three body parts (head, thorax, abdomen). How many legs do spiders have? How many body parts?
- Encourage children to choose an activity card and inspect it with a magnifier. Help them find the insects and/or spiders and complete the activity.
- Make a chart to show the different ways that tiny animals help gardens. For example, bees, flies, and butterflies pollinate flowers so that fruit and seeds can be produced. Spiders, ladybugs, and praying mantises eat insects that harm plants, such as aphids and caterpillars. And worms (which are neither spiders nor insects) eat dirt, breaking up hard soil so that air and water can get in and roots can grow.



## Art

- Use the sponge stampers to create a classroom mural. Set out shallow pans of tempera paint to which you have added a little white paint to lighten the colors. Have children dip the sponges in the paint and then stamp them on butcher paper. When the paint dries, use markers to add details. Paint grass and flowers along the bottom of the mural if desired.
- Have children each drip or splatter paint on one side of a sheet of paper. Have kids fold their papers in half, press the sides together, and then open them to reveal beautiful butterfly wings! Add heads, bodies, legs, and antennae with markers. Then, cut out the butterflies and use string or yarn to suspend them from the ceiling.
- Help children create cute bug costumes. Use paper grocery bags to make the bodies. Cut out holes for the arms and neck and paint stripes, spots, or other designs. Attach paper wings if desired. Then, cut paper strips to form headbands. Make antennae from pipe stems and pom-poms and attach them to the headbands.
- Use liquid glue to draw a spiderweb on paper. Sprinkle with transparent glitter for a "dewy" effect.



## Sand & Water

- Build a giant anthill in your sand table. Place the plastic ants as if they were leaving or entering the anthill.
- Take the sponge stampers outside. Dip them in water and stamp bugs all over the playground!
- Bury the spiders in your sand table and prompt children to use the tweezers to try to find them.



## Language

- Review the photo cards one by one. Help children identify each insect or spider and talk about what they know about each one. What else would they like to learn?
  - Create a class “Big Book of Bugs.” Provide large sheets of paper and have children draw or paint pictures of bugs, or prompt them to use the sponge stampers. Invite students to dictate sentences about their pictures and write the bugs’ names at the bottom of their pages. Write “Written and Illustrated by” on a title page and have everyone sign their names. Finally, add covers and staple your big book together.
- Show children a bee miniature and say, “This is a bee. What do bees say?” Emphasize the initial /b/ sounds as you say, “Bees say ‘buzz.’ ‘Bees’ and ‘buzz’ both begin with the /b/ sound.” Help children think of other words that begin with the /b/ sound, such as “butterfly,” “beetle,” and “bug.” When children think of a word, write it on the board, underlining the initial B. Then, read the list, emphasizing the beginning sound of each word as you touch the first letter.
- Use insect names to practice clapping out syllables. Show children the butterfly card and clap three times as you say “but-ter-fly.” Have children clap and say the word along with you. Repeat for other insect names, clapping once for “ants,” four times for “ta-ran-tu-la,” and so on. Then, try it with students’ names!
- Play “Name that Bug!” Explain that you are going to brainstorm names for the bugs in your theme box, such as “Spencer Spider,” “Carlos Caterpillar,” and “Gracie Grasshopper.” List ideas on the board, and have children vote for their favorites.



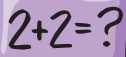
## Music

- Sing or chant bug-themed songs such as “The Itsy Bitsy Spider,” “The Ants Go Marching,” and “There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly.”
  - Provide children with black and yellow streamers or chiffon scarves. Then, play Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Flight of the Bumblebee” and encourage children to dance and buzz about.
  - Practice imitating insect noises. Buzz like a bee or a mosquito, chirp like a cricket, and hum like a cicada. Or, use musical instruments to create insect sounds.
  - Listen to a recording of sounds in nature. Can you pick out the insect sounds? Encourage children to draw or paint while listening to the recording.



## Active Play

- Play insect charades. Encourage children to pretend to be butterflies, worms, spiders, mosquitoes, and so on. Can the other students guess which insect is being acted out?
  - Have everyone form a line with each child holding the shoulders or waist of the child ahead. Then, challenge everyone to move together as if they were one giant centipede!
  - Jump up and down like grasshoppers.
  - Flutter about like butterflies on a calm day. What happens when a strong wind blows?
  - Use the plastic bugs and graspers for a relay race. Give each team a bug grasper and a bowl. Place the bugs in various places around the classroom or playground. Then, have children take turns capturing bugs with the graspers and carrying them to their bowls. Which team can capture the most bugs?

 $2+2=?$

## Math

- Compare the sizes of the plastic insects and sort them by size (i.e., big bugs and small bugs). Then, find pairs of matching big bugs and small bugs.
  - Use the sponge stampers to make repeating patterns on butcher paper. Encourage children to extend the patterns. Use the spider counters for additional patterning practice.
- Sort the plastic insects and spiders by number of legs. Can children find other ways to sort them?
- Cut a large red felt oval to form the body of a ladybug. Draw a black line down the center, and glue on a black head. Cut black felt spots and attach a hook & loop fastener dot to each one. Use the spots to practice counting and problem solving. For example, place 4 spots on the left side of the ladybug and 2 spots on the right side. How many are on each side? How many are there altogether? What could you do so that each side would have the same number of spots? (Add 2 spots to the right side, subtract 2 spots from the left side, or move 1 spot from the left side to the right side.) Be sure to have children explain their thinking.



## Dramatic Play

- Encourage children to buzz about like busy bees as they clean up the classroom.
  - Help children use strips of paper and pipe stems to make ant antennae. Remind them that ants cooperate to get jobs done. Have your ants wear their antennae as they work on projects together.
- Use yarn to make a giant spiderweb in your classroom. Pretend to be hungry spiders and flies that get stuck in the web.
- Provide flashlights and dim the classroom lights. Have children pretend to be fireflies and signal each other in the dark.



## Library

- *Ant Cities*  
by Arthur Dorros
- *Be Nice to Spiders*  
by Margaret Bloy Graham
- *Charlotte's Web*  
by E. B. White
- *Eency Weency Spider*  
by Joanne Oppenheim
- *The Grouchy Ladybug*  
by Eric Carle
- *The Lady and the Spider*  
by Faith McNulty
- *Miss Spider's Tea Party*  
by David Kirk
- *Spiders*  
by Gail Gibbons
- *Spider's Web*  
by Christine Back and Barrie Watts
- *The Very Busy Spider*  
by Eric Carle
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*  
by Eric Carle
- *The Very Quiet Cricket*  
by Eric Carle



## Cooking

- Make edible butterflies! Open hot dog buns completely and decorate these “wings” with mustard, ketchup, and relish. Add a hot dog for the butterfly’s body.
  - Provide a few different types of honey for children to taste. Which ones do they prefer?
  - Dip mini marshmallows in honey or condensed milk, and then roll them in green-tinted coconut. Line them up to form a furry caterpillar. Admire your creation—and then eat it!
- Make spider snacks. For the bodies, prepare cracker sandwiches using round crackers and cream cheese. For the legs, break 4 mini pretzel sticks in half and stick their ends into the cheese between the crackers. Use dabs of cheese to attach raisin eyes.