



Design a river minibeast

Links to the Key Stage 2 and 3 Science and Geography National Curriculum

Volunteers from our Trust sample minibeasts in the river every month. By studying what we find we can tell how polluted a river or stream is.

There are lots of different minibeasts that live in river and stream beds. Their scientific name is **invertebrates**. Invertebrates are animals that don't have a backbone. Some have soft bodies, like worms and leeches. Other invertebrates, like **insects, spiders** and **crustaceans**, have a hard outer casing called an **exoskeleton**. This is a bit like a suit of armour.

What you need

A piece of paper and some colouring pencils.

Your challenge

Imagine what the bottom of a stream or river is like. What is this **habitat** like? Is the water fast or slow? Is it gravelly or muddy? What else lives there? Do they want to eat you or could you eat them?



Design your own minibeast. Choose three of four **characteristics** from the second sheet in this activity and draw your own minibeast. Think about why it might have those characteristics. Usually they are **adaptations** that make it more successful. They could help it hide or survive. Label and explain your choice of characteristics.

Find out more

Now let's see what characteristics real invertebrates have. Is your creature similar to any real invertebrates in these videos from the Field Studies Council?

<https://www.fscbiodiversity.uk/films/freshwaterinverts>

Salmon and Trout Conservation has a great video on how to take a river fly sample <https://tinyurl.com/RiverFlySample>

Thank you to The Wild Trout Trust for the use of some of their images.

Find out more about how we are working to improve our river at www.airerivertrust.org.uk



To book a free Key Stage 2 River Defenders school session email contact@airerivertrust.org.uk

Funded by





Design your minibeast

Choose three or four **characteristics** from this sheet and draw your own **invertebrate**. How do they help it thrive and survive in the environment where it lives, its river bed **habitat**?

It is a strong / fast swimmer

It has powerful jaws

It has body and legs are slender for squeezing into narrow crevices or clinging to bottom in fast currents

It has a long slender legs for clambering on submerged vegetation

Has powerful pincers at the end of its front legs

Its adult form emerges from the water with wings

It has a hard outer casing called an exoskeleton

It has a soft body like a worm

It's body is camouflaged by being a similar colour to its surroundings

It has a sucking mouth part

It has clearly visible gills for breathing underwater

It's legs and jaws are adapted for burrowing into the sand and silt

It builds a case around its self out of twigs and stones