

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

Meet The Crayfish

How are crayfish and insects alike and different?

The kingdom of animals is subdivided into a handful of groups called phyla. All the animals in a phylum share fundamental similarities. For instance, humans are in the same phylum (Chordata) with the other mammals, birds, and snakes because all have backbones.

Crayfish are in the phylum Arthropoda. The name means 'jointed legs.' Arthropods include crayfish, crabs, shrimps, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, and insects. The most common arthropods on Earth are insects. You should be able to find one (or several) insects to compare to the crayfish we have been studying in class.

***Safety Note:** While most insects and insect relatives are harmless, some can sting (bees, wasps, ants) and some can bite (spiders, centipedes). Observe closely without touching.*

- A large, live insect is best if you can corral one for a while in a jar. You might be able to catch a cricket, roach, or grasshopper.
- Look on window sills or in light fixtures for dead insects.
- Find a small insect under a rock or in some other hiding place.
- Remember not to harm a living critter and to return it back to its habitat after you observe it.

After you capture a critter, observe it and complete the table on the back of this sheet.

	Crayfish	Insect
How many legs?		
How many antennae?		
How many eyes?		
What kind of tail?		
How many wings?		
What kind of mouth?		
How many leg joints?		

In the space below, discuss how these structures help the crayfish and insect survive. Feel free to sketch models of each to illustrate your thinking.

Crayfish

Insect