

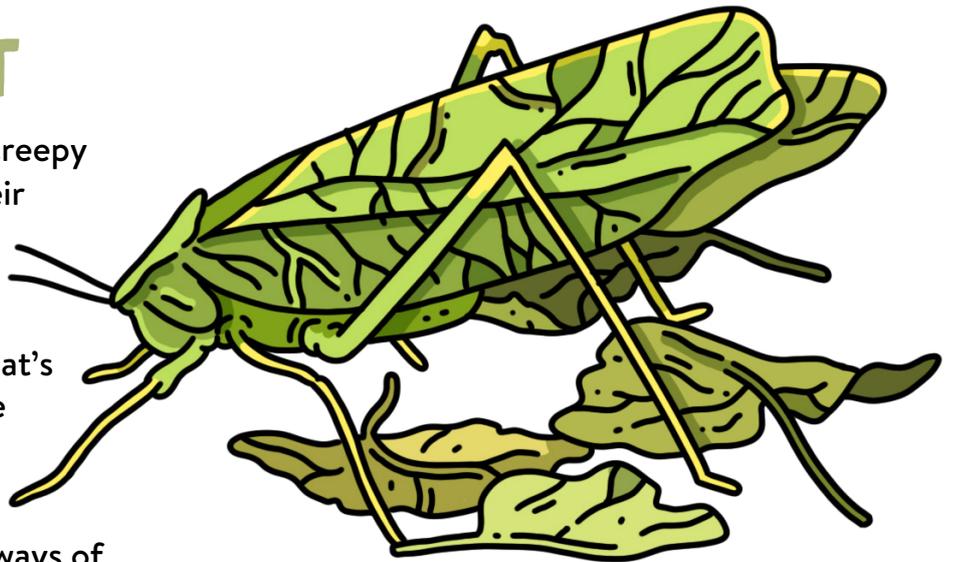
DESIGN A DISGUISE

Imagine being an insect! The world would be a large and scary place if you were at constant risk of being gobbled up for dinner. Fortunately, brainy bugs have slowly adapted to their dangerous surroundings by becoming masters of disguise.

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

In the cut-throat world of creepy crawlies, survival is key. Their small size makes them prey for so many animals, and insects would usually stand no chance against a bat's crushing jaws, or the savage speed of a scorpion sting.

Impressively, minibeasts have come up with special ways of avoiding danger. We call these 'survival strategies', and some are truly mindboggling! Take camouflage, for example. This sneaky superpower allows insects to hide from predators by blending into their surroundings. Stick insects can make themselves look just like twigs swaying in the wind – and who would settle for a tiny brown twig for dinner? In fact, the colour tricks played by insects can even fool human eyes!



Some amazing insect camouflage!

WISE UP WORDS:

- ➔ **ADAPT**
The way animals slowly change to better suit their home
- ➔ **CAMOUFLAGE**
What some insects use to disappear into the background
- ➔ **DISGUISE**
Making yourself look very different
- ➔ **PREDATOR**
An animal that eats other animals
- ➔ **SURVIVAL STRATEGY**
A plan for staying alive

COPYCAT CATERPILLARS

Scared of snakes? You wouldn't want to meet a spicebush swallowtail caterpillar in the wild. Despite its small size, this caterpillar has learned to make itself look like a deadly snake! With a forked tongue, large chest and fake eyespots on its head, the crafty caterpillar waves its body back and forth to warn off predators.



What do you see?

→ YOUR QUEST ←

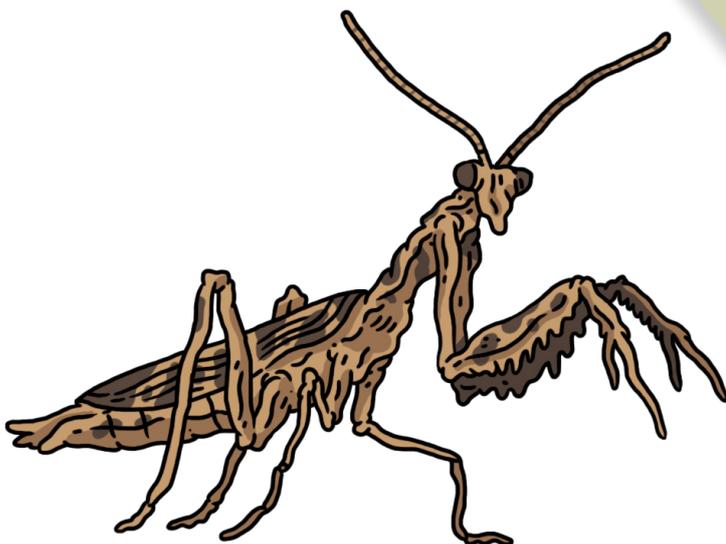
Draw an imaginary bug with a cunning disguise. This could be clever camouflage, or scary spots and stripes. Your minibeast could even change shape or size to suit its habitat. Let your imagination run wild!

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Sting like a bee or change colour like a golden tortoise beetle?

WHY NOT...

- Label the drawing with any other survival strategies you have given your bug. Perhaps it has a revolting smell, a razor-sharp sting or painfully prickly hairs!
- Think about your bug's place in the food chain. Which creatures or plants would it need to eat to survive?
- Give your creepy crawly its very own name. Some insects are named after the person who discovered them; others have nicknames based on their looks, like the praying mantis.



FUN FACT:

The super survival strategies of insects make them world champions of hide-and-seek. Did you know that scientists think there are up to nine *million* different species living on Earth that we have not even discovered yet?!

ULTIMATE INFLUENCERS: CHARLES DARWIN

Charles Darwin was the first person to explain how living things change over time. He noticed that the natural world was like a big competition, where only the strongest, fastest or cleverest creatures were able to adapt and 'win' the prize of survival. These winners then passed on their survival strategies to their offspring, and the whole species would gradually change.



JUST FOR LAUGHS:
HOW CAN YOU TELL WHICH END IS THE HEAD OF A WORM?
TICKLE THE MIDDLE AND SEE WHERE IT LAUGHS!

SEEING RED

Other minibeast disguises are loud and proud. Butterflies and moths use the colourful patterns on their wings to look like beady eyes. This helps to spook hungry predators into leaving them well alone.

The golden tortoise beetle has a particularly crafty weapon up its sleeve. When it feels under threat, the runny fluid inside its shell dries up, giving the beetle an angry red glow. Scientists think that the colour change is a trick to make them look like a poisonous insect. In truth, the golden tortoise beetle is harmless – but it'll never tell you that!



FLYING HIGH!

They may be small, but creepy crawlies have some amazing skills. If designing your own clever bug has inspired you to find out more, check out these other dazzling disguises. Can you spot the creatures in the photos?



See spots before your eyes!