



ALL ABOUT MOSQUITOES

Buzz, zip, and discover the tiny insects
with a big impact!

A NONFICTION UNIT

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MEET THE MOSQUITOES!

Bzzzz! A small insect hums past your ear—it's a mosquito! **Mosquitoes** are tiny flying insects found all over the world. They are best known for their itchy bites, but mosquitoes are also part of nature's food web. Birds, frogs, fish, and bats all depend on mosquitoes for food.





WHAT MOSQUITOES ARE LIKE

Mosquitoes are **insects** with six long legs, two wings, and a thin body. They have a long, needle-like mouth called a **proboscis**.

Mosquitoes use this mouth to sip liquids. Their wings make a buzzing sound when they fly.





WHERE MOSQUITOES LIVE

Mosquitoes live near water. They can be found near ponds, puddles, lakes, swamps, and even small containers filled with rainwater. Some mosquitoes live in warm places, while others live in cooler areas. Wherever there is standing water, mosquitoes may be nearby. They rest in shady places like grass, bushes, and under leaves.

FROM EGG TO ADULT

Mosquitoes grow through four life stages. First, a female mosquito lays eggs on or near water. The eggs hatch into **larvae**, which live in the water and wiggle as they move. Next, the larvae turn into **pupae**, still living in water. Finally, an adult mosquito emerges and flies away. This whole life cycle can happen in just a few weeks.



WHAT MOSQUITOES EAT

Most mosquitoes drink **nectar** from flowers, just like bees and butterflies. Nectar gives them energy. Only female mosquitoes bite people or animals. They need protein from blood to help them lay eggs. Male mosquitoes do not bite at all. They only drink nectar.



HOW MOSQUITOES FIND PEOPLE

Mosquitoes are good at tracking people. Female mosquitoes smell the **carbon dioxide** we breathe out. They also notice heat and sweat. When they land, they poke the skin and drink a little blood. The bite itches because our skin reacts to their saliva.





INSIDE A MOSQUITO'S LIFE

Most adult mosquitoes live only a few weeks, and males often live for about a week. After becoming adults, they look for nectar to drink and safe places to rest. Female mosquitoes lay eggs many times during their lives.





KEEPING SAFE FROM MOSQUITOES

People can stay safe from mosquito bites in simple ways. Wearing long sleeves and pants helps cover the skin. Using mosquito nets and window screens keeps mosquitoes out of homes. Dumping standing water stops mosquitoes from laying eggs. Mosquitoes don't bite to be mean—they are just following their **instincts**.

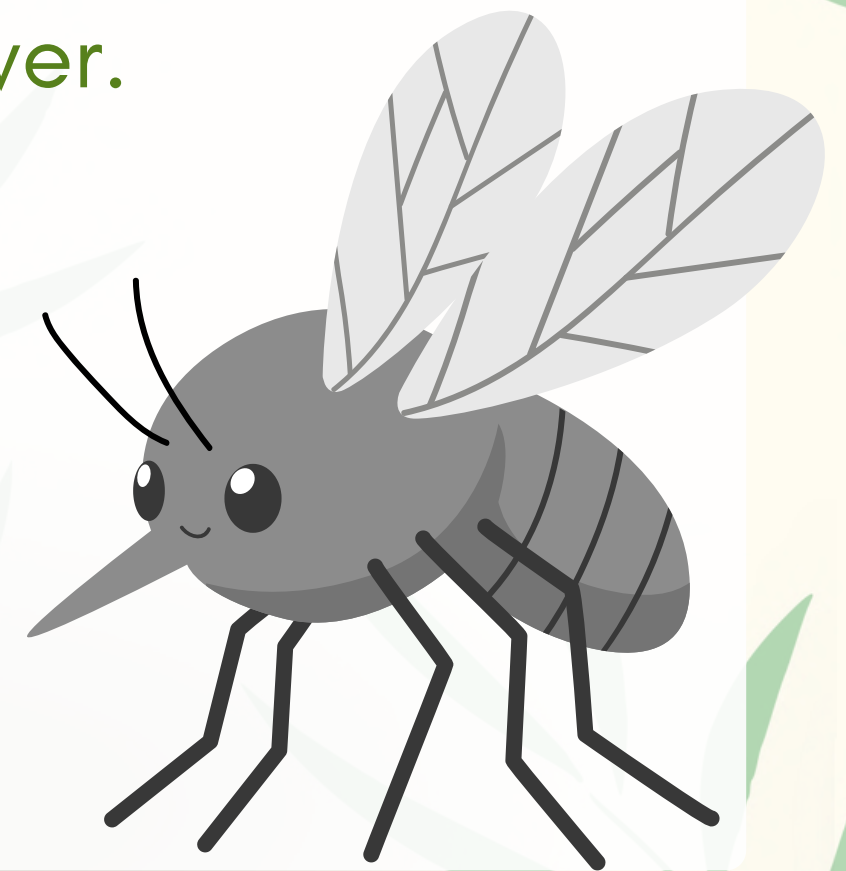
DID YOU KNOW?

Mosquitoes may be small, but many animals depend on them for food. Fish eat mosquito larvae in the water, and birds and bats catch adults in the air. They help keep nature's **food web** balanced.



QUESTION TIME!

1. (True or False) Mosquitoes are insects.
2. (True or False) All mosquitoes bite people.
3. (True or False) Mosquitoes grow in water.
4. (Fact or Opinion) Mosquitoes drink nectar.
5. (Fact or Opinion) Mosquitoes are the worst insects ever.
6. Where do mosquitoes lay their eggs?
7. What is a proboscis used for?
8. Who bites—male or female mosquitoes?
9. Why do mosquitoes buzz when they fly?
10. How can people help keep mosquitoes away?



ANSWERS

1. True. Mosquitoes are insects.
2. False. Only female mosquitoes bite people.
3. True. Mosquitoes grow in water.
4. Fact. Mosquitoes drink nectar from flowers.
5. Opinion. "The worst insects ever" is a personal feeling.
6. They lay their eggs on or near water.
7. A proboscis is used for sipping liquids.
8. Female mosquitoes bite.
9. The buzzing sound comes from their wings.
10. By covering skin and removing standing water.



GLOSSARY

Carbon dioxide – a gas we breathe out that mosquitoes can smell

Food web – a chain that shows which plants and animals eat each other

Insect – a small animal with six legs and three body parts

Instinct – something an animal knows how to do without being taught

Larvae – baby mosquitoes that live and wiggle in water

Mosquito – a small flying insect; females bite to drink blood and both drink nectar

Nectar – sweet juice from flowers that insects drink for energy

Proboscis – a long, thin mouthpart mosquitoes use to poke skin and drink

Pupae – the stage when a mosquito is changing into an adult



FUN WITH MOSQUITOES

It was a little mosquito's first day flying away from home. When the mosquito came back, its mom asked, "How was your trip?" "It was great!" said the little mosquito. "Everyone was clapping for me!"