

# Mealworms or Other Invertebrates

## Mealworm Metamorphosis

### What you need!

- 20-30 mealworms- available from most pet stores
- Plastic tub container with a lid
- Mixture of rolled oats and bran
- Vegetable scraps

When humans are born, they emerge pretty much as miniature versions of adults. This is not so for many types of insects and amphibians. These animals typically go through one or two life stages before transforming into their adult phase. This final transformation is called metamorphosis.

### What you do:

1. Fill the bottom of your plastic tub with about 5 cm of the oat and bran mixture
  2. Put a few scraps of vegetables in the mixture.
  3. Put in your mealworm larvae.
4. Cover the plastic tub with the lid. Poke a few air holes in the lid.
  5. Put the plastic tub someplace warm and out of the way.
  6. Feed the mealworms whenever their food seems to be running low.
  7. Observe the mealworms for several weeks.



### Ask yourself:

- How can you track the changes you see? Design a method to record and chart the developments and changes of your mealworms.
- How many different life stages do you observe? How can you tell it is a different life stage? Note the differences and similarities between the stages.
- Why do you think a species might develop to have different life stages for its young and adults?
- What would be an advantage of having two different life stages?

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### What did you find out?

By following through on this project you will find out that a mealworm is really not a worm at all - it is in fact a beetle. Larval forms of insects and amphibians often do not look like their adult forms at all (think about caterpillars, butterflies and salamanders). One of the reasons for this is to reduce the competition for food sources between adults and larvae of the same species. This increases the species' odds of survival.

### Specific Learner Expectations (SLE)

**Grade 1 Topic E:** Needs of Animals and Plants.

SLE 6: Identify the requirements of animals to maintain life: i.e., air; food; water; shelter; space; and recognize that we must provide these for animals in our care.

**Grade 3 Topic E:** Animal Life Cycles.

SLE 2: Observe and describe the growth and development of at least one animal as the animal develops from early to more advanced stages. Suggested examples include gerbils, guppies, mealworms, tadpoles, and worms.