

Grade Level: 1-4

Science

Time: One class period to set up, plus observation time over the next few days.

Materials:

- 2 clear plastic containers (one slightly smaller than the other)
- Soil
- Screen or a piece of nylon
- Rubber band
- About 10 worms - to located worms outside dig in soft, moist soil

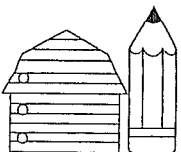
Clitellum is the wide, thick band around the worm's middle. It is closest to the head end. A worm's body is made up of segments.

Each segment of a worm's body has two pairs of special bristles (called **setae**). Feel them by wetting your fingers and run them down the worm's body to feel the rough setae.

Reading Suggestion:

This activity goes great with *An Earthworm's Life*, by John Himmelman.

www.idahoaitc.org



Ag in the Classroom

Build a Worm Condo

Description

The worm "condo" built in this activity allows students to observe worms tunnel through the dirt and see their segmented body parts in action. When the class is done observing the worms, return them to their natural environment. The Worm Condo is an ideal activity if you want to observe worms for a short period of time. If your class would like to create small worm bins for long term observation, check out the AITC hands-on activity on *Build a Mini Worm Bin*.

Directions

1) Place the smaller clear container (needs to be an inch or so smaller in diameter) inside the larger clear plastic container. You need to create a space for the worms to move, but you want it narrow enough so you can view their worms tunnels.

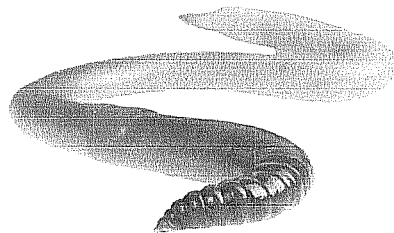
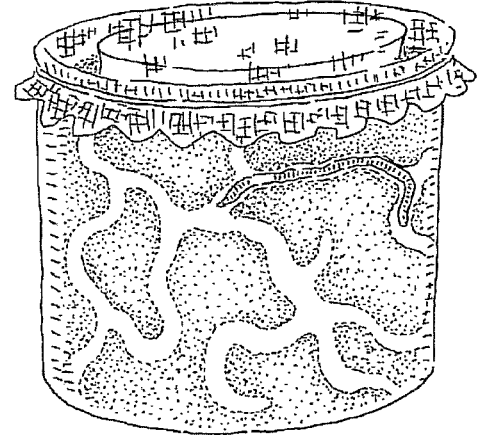
2) Fill the space between the two containers with fresh soil (do not use potting soil). Keep the soil moist, but not soaking wet.

3) Place worms in the area with the soil, then cover the container with a piece of nylon stocking. This will allow air to flow. Secure the stocking with a rubber band.

4) Now watch the worms tunnel through the soil!

5) **Caring for the worms:** Keep the worm condo out of the direct sun and keep the soil moist (not wet) while you are observing the worms. When the activity is done, release the worms back outside. If you are going to keep the worms for a few days, you will need to feed the worms. Worms like to eat decomposing plant matter such as leaves.

6) If you would like to view the worms over a longer period of time, build a "wormery" or worm compost bin. Directions on how to build a "wormery" can be found online at AITC under Teacher Resources/Hands-on Activities.



Notes:

Worm is the common name given to a diverse group of invertebrate animals that have a long, soft body and no legs. There are hundreds of thousands of worms, 2,700 of these are earthworms which are segmented worms, with bodies divided into segments, or rings.

Worms are shallow-soil dwelling creatures that feed on decomposing plant matter in the soil, they adapt easily to living on food or plant waste in the confines of a worm bin. Worms used in compost systems prefer temperatures of 55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (12-21 degrees Celsius). To locate worms outside for this and other activities, dig in an area with soft, moist soil.

How Stuff Works, *Worm Activities*, <http://home.howstuffworks.com/worm-activities2.htm>