

Escape From the Antlion's Pit

Scientific Background

Antlions build pits in sandy environments. The pits act as traps for small insects that pass by and fall inside. The waiting antlion grabs the prey after it falls into the pit and kills it with its pinchers. An antlion will build a new pit in a different location if it can not catch enough prey.

Students will use observation skills during this experiment to see how often the prey can escape an antlion's pit. Based on the results of the experiments, students will draw conclusions about how effective the antlion's pit is for capturing prey.

Vocabulary

- abdomen
- pinchers
- jaws
- larva
- inject
- prey
- predator
- soil

Vocabulary definitions can be found in the ***Backyard Bugs*** Glossary.

Thinking Question

What do you think would happen if an antlion were *not* able to catch enough of its prey using its pit?

Exploratory and Extension Activities

Additional Exploratory and Extension activities are available in the Backyard Bugs Teacher's Guide.

Antlions Around the World

Visit www.antlionpit.com/culture.html for reference information.

Include the riddle by Aldhelm at www.antlionpit.com/aldhelm.html, in Latin and English, when discussing the different names for antlions from different languages. Use a world map to have students identify the countries where the languages for the different antlion names are spoken.

Bug Postage Stamp

Visit <http://www.govspot.com/ask/suggestastamp.htm>, to learn about the process used by the U.S. Postal Service to get ideas from the public about new stamp designs. Have students create a postage stamp to honor the antlion.

Name: _____

Escape From the Antlion's Pit

Watch the ten Antlion food videos.
Mark the box for each prey to show if it
escaped or was captured by the antlion.

Prey Number	Escaped	Captured
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

The prey escaped _____ times.

The prey was captured _____ times.

Did the prey **escape** or get **captured** more times? _____

How many more times? _____

Is an antlion pit a good way to capture prey? Why or why not? _____

Answer Key

Escape From the Antlion's Pit

Watch the ten Antlion food videos. Mark the box for each prey to show if the prey escaped or was captured by the antlion.		
Prey Number	Escaped	Captured
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Suggested answer:

Student responses to this table will vary.

For the Escape From the Antlion's Pit activity, there is a collection of 12 videos, from which 10 are randomly selected.

From the 10 videos, a maximum of 3 prey animals may escape from their antlion predators.

Students may find 1, 2, or 3 prey that escape, and 7, 8, or 9 prey that are captured.

The prey escaped _____ times. **Correct answer may be 1, 2, or 3.**

The prey was captured _____ times. **Correct answer may be 7, 8, or 9.**

Did the prey **escape** or get **captured** more times? **The prey are captured more times.**

How many more times? **Correct answer may be 4, 6, or 8, depending on the number of prey that escape and the number of prey that are captured.**

Is an antlion pit a good way to capture prey? Why or why not? **A pit is a good way for antlions to capture prey. Based on this experiment, there is a good chance of capturing prey using a pit. Some prey escape, but many do not.**