

## **Insect Body Parts and their Functions**

### ***Scientific Background***

Insects have body parts that serve specific functions. The antlion larva's jaws help it catch prey. The Monarch caterpillar's prolegs allow it to hold on to plants while eating and walking. A whirligig beetle's paddle-like legs help it swim efficiently in the water. An adult dragonfly's wings serve several functions – to help it catch prey, to allow for escape from predators, and to aid in the pursuit of a mate. The male Luna moth uses its feathery antennae to find a female by detecting her pheromones. The hickory horned devil's horns scare off predators. These adaptations help insects to survive in their environment and ultimately reproduce and lay eggs.

### ***Vocabulary***

- antennae
- jaws
- paddle-like
- predator
- prolegs
- feathery
- mate
- pheromones
- prey
- wings

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

### ***Thinking Question***

Think about the different parts of the human body, such as fingers, toes, lips, teeth, or knees. How do people use that body part? Why does that body part work well for the function it performs?

### ***Exploratory and Extension Activities***

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

### **Dragonfly Poetry**

Read Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1833 poem, *The Dragon-fly*. Discuss descriptive language, the imagery, thoughts, and words used in Tennyson's poem. How many lines did Tennyson use? Does he create a clear picture of a dragonfly? Discuss the rhyme pattern used in the poem: A, A, B, B, B, C, C, C. Introduce the concept of metrical foot (the analysis of a poem's rhythm). Have each student write a poem about another insect.

### **Insect Song**

Teach a song about insect body parts using the tune of *Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes*:

Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen  
Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen  
Six legs, two wings and an exoskeleton  
Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen








Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen  
Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen  
Big eyes, small size and little feelers, too  
Head and thorax, abdomen, abdomen

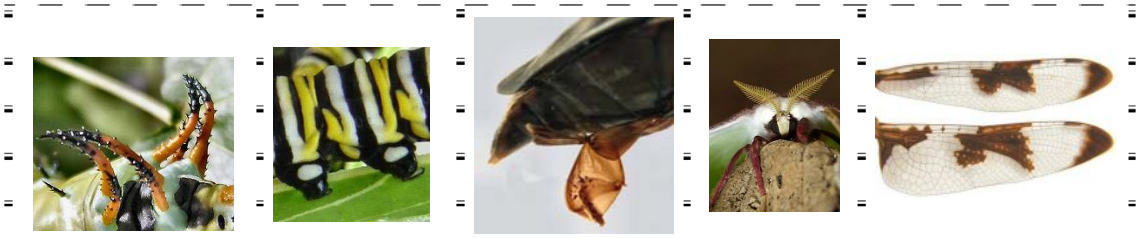
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## Insect Body Parts and Their Functions

**Cut out the pictures of the body parts below.**

**Paste them next to the body they match.**

Insect	Paste the picture of the matching body part.	Write the name of the body part.	What is this body part used for?
 <b>Antlion Larva</b>		<p><b>jaws</b></p>	<p><b>to catch prey</b></p>
 <b>Monarch Caterpillar</b>			
 <b>Whirligig Beetle</b>			
 <b>Dragonfly Adult</b>			
 <b>Luna Moth Adult</b>			
 <b>Hickory Horned Devil</b>			








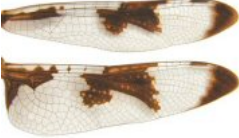






## Answer Key

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**Cut out the pictures of the body parts below.**

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Insect	Paste the picture of the matching body part.	Write the name of the body part.	What is this body part used for?
 <b>Antlion Larva</b>		<b>jaws</b>	<b>to catch prey</b>
 <b>Monarch Caterpillar</b>		<b>prolegs</b>	<b>to hold on to plants while it eats and to walk</b>
 <b>Whirligig Beetle</b>		<b>legs</b>	<b>to paddle in the water</b>
 <b>Dragonfly Adult</b>		<b>wings</b>	<b>to fly to be able catch prey and escape from predators to find a mate</b>
 <b>Luna Moth Adult</b>		<b>feathery antennae</b>	<b>the male uses them to find a female to detect pheromones</b>
 <b>Hickory Horned Devil</b>		<b>horns</b>	<b>to scare off predators</b>