Overview

Today we’re going to talk about worms and other living things that help the earth, but first I want to know, does anyone ever have to take out the trash? It’s kind of smelly and gross right? But someone has to do it! Humans aren’t the only ones who make trash though, nature makes trash too! Sometimes plants drop their leaves on the ground, and animals drop poop on the ground! But have you ever wondered who cleans it up? That’s where decomposers come in!

Prezi-Decomposers are small creatures in our environment that eat all of nature’s trash. They eat all the things in nature that are waste- like dead leaves and animals and animal poop. There are four main types of decomposers-worms, insects, fungi, and bacteria.

Biology-Before we get into all the different types of decomposers, we need to figure out what kind of science this is! Studying decomposers falls under biology. Biology is the study of all living things!

Insects and Worms

Earthworms are one of the main decomposers. They live in the soil and help to eat dead plants, roots, some animal poop, and some animals that have died.
Insects

What animal do you usually see flying around trash cans? That’s because insects like flies are also decomposers! They like to help eat all of our food trash too!

There are lots and lots of types of insects, and many help out in different ways to decompose waste. There are insects that eat poop- like the Dung Beetle. There are insects that eat other animals that have died, and there are insects that eat rotting fruit, veggies, and leaves like the Madagascar Hissing Cockroach.

Fungi

Fungi are another type of decomposer. Fungi usually take the form of mushrooms or mold. Fungi grow right on top of their food! They can be found mostly near dead or dying plants and trees. They help to keep all of our dead leaves decomposed!

Bacteria

Most decomposers are too small to see. Many of them are called bacteria. Bacteria are very tiny living things that can live anywhere. Ever see a rotten piece of fruit? This is usually caused by bacteria getting inside it over the course of a week or two.

Make a Worm Home

Materials and Resources

- Clear container
- Sand
- Soil
- Gravel
- Leaves

Steps & Directions

1. First, add gravel to the bottom of your container.
2. Add soil and sand, alternating between the two. Add leaves and grass on top.

3. Now, go find some worms in your backyard and add them to your wormery!

4. You should see the sand and the soil get mixed up as the worms burrow and move. The leaves and grass will get moved down too.

5. Keep making lots of observations and keep the wormery out of direct sunlight.

Taking it Further

Vocabulary Review
What words can we remember from this?

- Biology: The study of life
- Decomposers: Small creatures in our environment that eat all of nature's trash
- Fungi: A type of decomposer that usually takes the form of mushrooms and mold
- Bacteria: A type of decomposer that is too small to see but helps break down waste