

## **Crickets: Territorial Insects**

### **Big World of Insects, Spiders & Bugs Series**

**Subject Areas:** Science, Life Science, Biology

**Synopsis:** Students will be able to compare and contrast the common cricket that lives aboveground with the mole cricket that burrows underground. Both species are territorial and fight fiercely to protect their areas.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to describe the physical characteristics of both types of crickets.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to compare and contrast mole crickets with aboveground crickets.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to describe how crickets protect their territories.

**Vocabulary:** Define and discuss the following key terms:  
Cricket, abundant, vicinity, belligerent, boring (digging), subterranean, cannibalism, predator

**Pre-Viewing Questions and Discussion:**

- 1) What sound do crickets make? How do they make this sound? What does it tell other crickets?
- 2) Do all insects live aboveground? Can you think of any insects that live in the ground?

**Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:**

- 1) How does the cricket make its familiar sound? What does this noise tell other crickets?
- 2) Describe what the cricket looks like.
- 3) What did the ancient Chinese do with crickets?
- 4) Where do crickets live?
- 5) Describe how crickets fight. What do they fight about?
- 6) Where does a mole cricket live? What does it look like?
- 7) The mole cricket is designed to dig. Describe the special adaptations this insect has that allow it to be such a good digger.
- 8) What is the 'egg chamber'? How does the mole cricket care for its young?
- 9) What do mole crickets eat?

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- 10) Why might a gardener be annoyed with a mole cricket?
- 11) How big is a fully-grown adult mole cricket? How long is the maze of tunnels?
- 12) Do mole crickets live socially?
- 13) What does a mole cricket do when it goes aboveground?
- 14) How do male mole crickets attract mates? What can a female mole cricket tell from a male cricket's song? Why do male mole crickets sing on damp nights?

### **Additional Activities:**

- 1) Draw detailed pictures of both types of crickets. Label the head, thorax, abdomen, six legs, wings and antenna.
- 2) Pretend that you are either a mole cricket or a cricket that lives aboveground. Write a story that describes your typical day. Include descriptions of the how you defend your territory and communicate with other crickets.
- 3) Research mole crickets. How are they specially adapted to their environments? Are these insects considered beneficial to gardeners or pests?
- 4) Research how crickets communicate. Prepare a report that includes a variety of species.

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