

## Time needed:

Three class periods

## Materials needed:

16-ounce plastic cups, landscape fabric (or some type of thin material that can be used to make the drift fence)

The question you will answer in this FACTivity is: What types of insects live on the grounds of our school?

## Procedure:

You will do an experiment similar to what the scientists did in this article, except you will be studying insects on the ground instead of snakes. First, your teacher will break your class into small groups of three or four students. Each group will take a section of the schoolyard to monitor for ground-level insects. Once students have divided up the schoolyard into sections for each group, the groups will make two pitfall traps and two drift fences.

To make the pitfall traps, use two 16-ounce cups. Dig a hole and place each cup into the hole so that the lip of the cup is level with the ground. After the two cups are in the ground, use the material to make a drift fence toward the cup. Each drift fence should be 2 feet long and 1 foot high. Check the traps several times a day and

record the number of insects in the trap and what kind of insect it is or a general description of the insect. NOTE: Make sure that no one hurts the insects or touches them. Use eyes only to observe the insects. After recording, empty the cup of insects in another part of the schoolyard.

Following a day's worth of observation, compare results with the class and discuss. Some questions to help guide the discussion are:

1. What types of insects did you see the most? Was this surprising? Why or why not?
2. What is the problem with this type of trap and obtaining information about insects?
3. Was it easy or hard to make the traps and then monitor them? What challenges did you have?
4. If you were to make this experiment better, what kind of experiment would you design to find out what insects live on the grounds of your school?



**Teachers:** If you are a PLT-trained educator, you may use Activity #81, "Living With Fire," and #22, "Trees As Habitats," as additional resources.