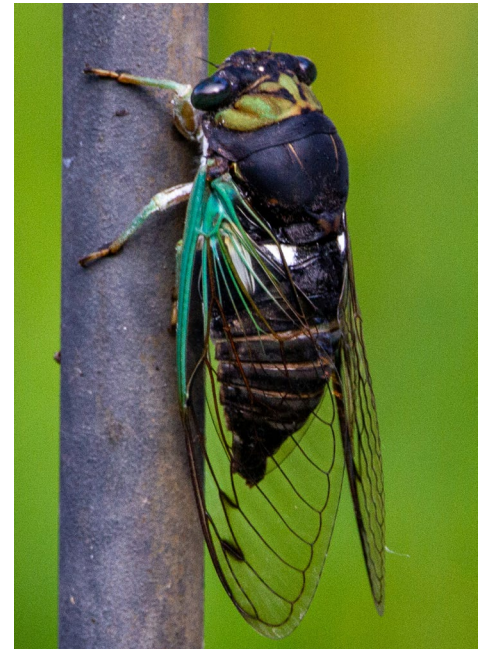


Crazy Cool Facts About Cicadas












Did you know that there are more than 3,000 species of cicadas? Depending on the species, they can spend anywhere from **two to 17 years** underground, and when they finally surface, they get to enjoy living above ground for only a few weeks. Crazy, right? Let's help cicadas enjoy their lives to the fullest by respecting them and not harming them.

You can tell students that cicadas are large insects with wings that can make loud noises, which is their way of singing, and that you'll be sharing some fascinating facts about these cool individuals.

The images and facts about cicadas can be displayed on a screen and read aloud to the class as you point at the icons next to each fact as a visual cue. Have students listen for the facts they think are the most interesting. Read them aloud again and have students raise their hands when they hear their favorite facts. You can incorporate math concepts by doing a tally of students' favorite facts on the board and then reviewing the list together and discussing why they found particular facts to be the most interesting. Students can complete one of the informational writing graphic organizers below with their favorite three facts about cicadas. We've included two graphic organizers, one that's basic and one for more advanced students. Students who are able to do so can use the information from their graphic organizer to draft a short paragraph with a topic sentence and a conclusion.

Cicadas: Fascinating Facts

-  Cicadas keep track of time by tasting the soil and measuring its temperature. When it reaches 64 degrees, it's time to go above ground.
-  Even though cicadas don't have vocal cords like humans do, they do have a small vibrating organ called the tymbal (pronounced "tim-bal") that they use to make buzzing, humming, and clicking sounds to communicate with each other.
-  Cicadas love to "play loud music." They may be small, but that doesn't stop them from making sounds that can be heard from a mile and a half away. Talk about noisy neighbors!

-  The sounds we usually hear are “sung” by male cicadas to attract female partners.
-  Female cicadas are excellent gardeners. They dig tiny holes in branches to lay their eggs, which prunes the trees, resulting in more flowers and fruit.
- 3** Cicadas’ life cycle has three stages. First they hatch from eggs as wingless nymphs, then they dig into the ground, and finally they emerge (come out into view) years later and shed their skin to become adults with wings.
-  They provide free lawn care. When cicadas burrow, they aerate the soil, meaning they bring air into it, which helps the grass grow.
-  Cicadas can be very colorful. At first, their bodies are whitish in color, but then they can turn black, brown, or green with accents of red, orange, or yellow. Their wings are usually clear with beautiful, colorful veins. Their eyes can be a variety of colors, too, including red, brown, green, blue, and white.
-  They perform magic tricks. When cicadas molt, they split their skin (which is actually an exoskeleton) and pull themselves out of it. The exoskeleton, which they leave behind, looks like an empty body.
-  Cicadas protect themselves by emerging in astoundingly large numbers. Their goal is to outnumber their predators, which include birds, squirrels, racoons, and other wildlife, so they don’t all get eaten.

Bonus Fact:

In 2024, billions of cicadas emerged during a rare dual appearance of two groups, so we were able to see both of them at the same time. One group stays underground for 13 years, while the other group stays underground for 17 years. For the first time in 221 years, these groups surfaced together. This won’t happen again until the year 2245!

Discussion Questions

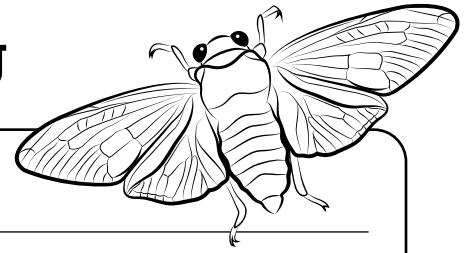
You can use these discussion questions to encourage students to think about cicadas’ activities, thoughts, and feelings:

- Some cicadas stay buried in the ground for two to five years, while others stay buried for 13 to 17 years. What might they think or dream about while they’re in total darkness underground? If you were a cicada, what’s the first thing you’d want to do when you finally surfaced after so many years?
- How do you think cicadas feel after they molt, come out of their exoskeleton, and experience their new body with wings? What do you think it’s like to be able to fly for the first time after being underground for so long without moving?
- Cicadas love “playing their music” to communicate with each other. What do you think they’re saying? If you could trade your voice for another sound, what sound would you choose and why?
- Cicadas come in a variety of color combinations. If you were a cicada, what colors would you want to be?

This fact sheet can be used alongside the accompanying coloring sheet, on which students can create and name their own colorful cicada friend. It pairs well with the book [Junebug: No Life Too Small](#) by Nicole Daniels and TeachKind’s [spring bug word search](#).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Informational Writing



Topic: _____

Topic Sentence: _____

Fact 1

Fact 2

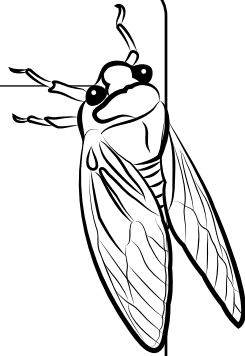
Fact 3

Conclusion:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Informational Writing

Topic: _____



Fact

Fact

Fact
