

'Fun facts' – What is an insect? Autumn 1

Did you know?

- Bumblebees are struggling to survive, with two species now extinct in the UK.
- Bumblebees are capable of buzz pollination, where the bee grabs the flower and produces a high-pitched buzz that causes the plant to release pollen.
- Honey bees and some bumblebees live socially. These bees are led by a queen, have a division of labour, live with their offspring and look after each other's young.
- In its lifetime, a single bee can collect enough nectar to make one twelfth of a teaspoon of honey.
- Eating honey can help you become smarter! It's the only food that contains 'pinocembrin', an antioxidant that improves brain function.
- Butterflies don't poo because their diet is made up entirely of liquid. If a butterfly has lots to drink, it sprays a fine liquid that is almost pure water!
- Butterflies can taste with their feet and choose the yummiest leaves to lay their eggs on, as these will be their caterpillars' food.
- The largest butterfly in the world is the Queen Alexandra's birdwing, which lives in Papua New Guinea and has a wing span of up to 31 cm. One of the smallest butterflies is the Western pygmy blue from Africa, which has a tiny 1.5 cm wingspan!
- Most spiders are carnivorous, as they feed on insects and other invertebrates. Some of the largest spiders even prey on vertebrates, including birds!
- Daddy longlegs are arachnids also known as harvestmen. They have three body sections (unlike spiders, who have two) and their legs have seven sections which they can break off to surprise or distract a predator!
- Scientists have proven that ants were alive during the dinosaur age and that dragonflies were around even before the dinosaurs!
- Ants are extremely strong and can carry objects 50 times heavier than their own body weight. For every human on Earth, there are 1.5 million ants! They live on every continent except Antarctica.
- A housefly beats its wings 200 times a second!
- Most snails have four tentacles – two for seeing and two for feeling and smelling.

