

# Mealworm & Darkling Beetle Scavenger Hunt Activity



**Materials:** Mealworms questions worksheet (pages 2-3)  
16 mealworm fact cards (pages 4-8)  
Scissors and scotch tape

**Preparation:** Print the insect fact cards and cut them apart.

Make copies of the mealworm questions worksheet (2-sided). Each student will need his or her own copy.

Hide all 16 mealworm fact cards around your classroom where students will be able to find them. You can put them on the back of your classroom door, on chairs, on the computer keyboard, on the sides of student desks, or wherever you like.



## Preview

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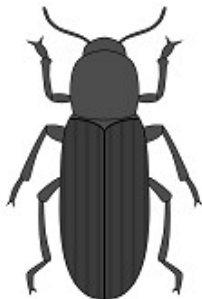
**Management tips:** You may want to make this a silent activity so students don't share answers with each other.

You can have the kids work by themselves or with partners.

Don't be afraid to hide the facts in tough places. Kids think it's more fun when they have to search around a little.

Examples of good hiding spots might include:

- sticking out of a book, like a bookmark
- the back of the classroom door
- lying flat on the bookshelf
- on the back of the teacher's chair
- on the side of your computer monitor



Have a plan for students who finish early. You may want to have an assignment for them to complete when they're done, or you may have them help other students find fact cards.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mealworm & Darkling Beetle Scavenger Hunt

**Fact Card #1:** Name the four stages of a darkling beetle's life.

\_\_\_\_\_



**Fact Card #2:** How long is a darkling beetle's egg?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #3:** How many eggs can a female darkling beetle lay at one time?



# Preview

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**Fact Card #6:** Why do people buy mealworms at pet shops?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #7:** How long does it take a mealworm egg to hatch?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #8:** Why are mealworms considered pests in people's homes?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Mealworm & Darkling Beetle Scavenger Hunt

**Fact Card #9:** Why shouldn't you eat the mealworms in your classroom?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #10:** What will happen if you don't give your mealworms enough food?  
\_\_\_\_\_

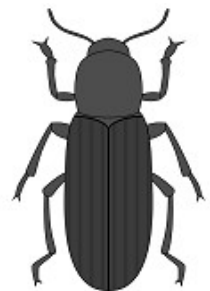
**Fact Card #11:** Do darkling beetles have wings?  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Preview**  
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**Fact Card #14:** Darkling beetles come in three colors. What are they?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #15:** Mealworms can't see the shapes of things around them. What can they see?  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Fact Card #16:** How did darkling beetles get their name?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

Fact Card #1

Mealworms are not really worms! A mealworm is really a darkling beetle in its larval stage.



There are four stages in a darkling beetle's life cycle:

1. egg
2. larva (mealworm)
3. pupa
4. adult (beetle)

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

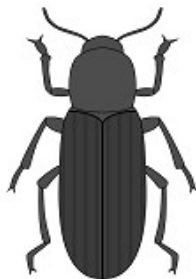
Fact Card #2



The egg of a mealworm or darkling beetle is very tiny - usually less than one millimeter long. It is difficult to see them without a microscope.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

Fact Card #3



A female darkling beetle lays 270 to 500 eggs at a time.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
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Fact Card #4



When a mealworm grows, it sheds its outer skin. This is called molting.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #5



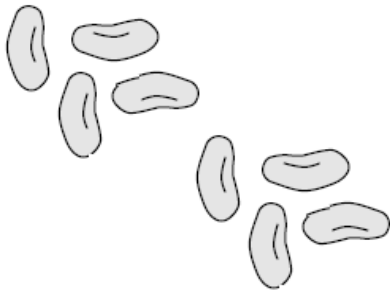
In the wild, mealworms eat mostly dead grass and rotting leaves.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #6



Many fishermen use mealworms at bait. Pet shops also sell them as food for lizards and birds.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #7



A mealworm egg takes about 4 weeks to hatch.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #8

Mealworms aren't pests to farmers because they don't usually harm live plants.

They can be pests in people's homes because they like to live in cereal and flour.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #9

Some humans eat mealworms as a special treat. They're very healthy and have lots of protein. People who eat mealworms put them in a large bowl and eat them with a spoon.



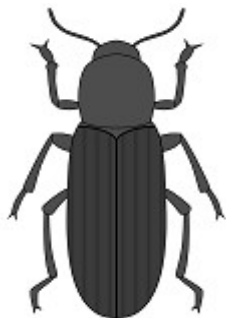
Don't eat the mealworms in your classroom, though. It is only safe to eat mealworms that have been cleaned properly.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #10



Be sure your mealworms have enough food! If you don't, they may eat each other.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #11



Darkling beetles do have wings, but they don't use them and cannot fly.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #12

When a mealworm is in the pupa stage, it cannot walk or move around, but it can wiggle its legs.



During this stage, it sits completely still for a week or two as it develops into an adult beetle.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

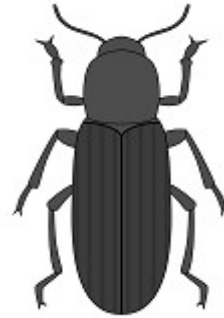
Fact Card #13



All mealworms have 13 body segments.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

Fact Card #14



Adult darkling beetles can be brown, black, or red.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

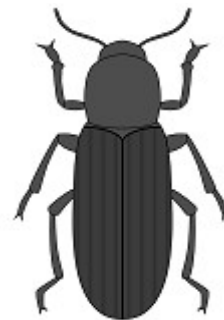
Fact Card #15



Mealworms can see light and dark, but they cannot see things around them.

Mealworm & Darkling Beetle  
**Scavenger Hunt**

Fact Card #16



Darkling beetles got their name because they are only active at night.

# ANSWER KEY

## Mealworm & Darkling Beetle Scavenger Hunt

**Fact Card #1:** Name the four stages of a darkling beetle's life.

The four stages are egg, larva (mealworm), pupa, and adult (beetle).



# Preview

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(Also accept: Fishermen buy them to use as bait.)

**Fact Card #7:** How long does it take a mealworm egg to hatch?

A mealworm egg takes 4 weeks (1 month) to hatch.

**Fact Card #8:** Why are mealworms considered pests in people's homes?

They like to live in cereal and flour.



# ANSWER KEY

## Mealworm & Darkling Beetle Scavenger Hunt

**Fact Card #9:** Why shouldn't you eat the mealworms in your classroom?

Many people eat mealworms, but they're only safe if they're cleaned properly.

# Preview

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**Fact Card #15:** Mealworms can't see the shapes of things around them. What can they see?

They can see light and dark

**Fact Card #16:** How did darkling beetles get their name?

Since they are only active at night, they were named darkling beetles.

