Greetings! My name is Mr. Ash and I’m an itsy bitsy germ. At first I was living in Marcia’s body. She didn’t wash her hands after she went to the bathroom. Then she hugged her friend Sally. That’s when I jumped into Sally’s body.

Atchoo!! Now I made Marcia and Sally sick!

Everybody gets sick sometimes. It’s because of me and all the other germs. But what are germs? How do we make people sick?

Germs are everywhere. They are at your house. They are also in your school and even at the park. They are tiny and you can’t see them with your eyes. You would need a microscope to see them. Some germs spread diseases. There are two main types. They are viruses and bacteria.

Bacteria are little creatures. They can live outside your body. They can also live inside you. Some bacteria are really nasty. They can cause infections. They can cause a sore throat, tonsillitis, ear infections or pneumonia.

Not all bacteria are bad though. Some kinds of bacteria are actually good for your bodies. They keep you balanced. For example, good bacteria lives in your intestines. They help your body digest food. Good bacteria are sometimes called “probiotics”.

Viruses are a bit different. They can only live inside you to survive. They can also live in a plant or animal. Whatever they live in is called the “host.”
They can spread and make you sick. They can cause yucky diseases like the flu, measles, and chicken pox. Good thing viruses don’t live long.

So how do we germs get around? Easy! We surf around in the air through sneezes, coughs, or breaths. We also travel in sweat, saliva, and blood. Some of us, like me, can travel from one person to another if they touch each other. We can live on objects for a while, like a doorknob. When the next person touches that doorknob, poof! I jump into their body.

So how can you protect yourself against me and all my buddies? The best way is to practice good hygiene. This means keeping yourselves clean. That way you have less chance of getting sick. Here are some good tips for keeping us germs away: wash your hands with soap often; cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze; cover your mouth when you cough; use tissues to clean your nose.

If you do all these things, you will be prepared to battle germs like me!

**About the Author**

Lydia Lukidis is a published children’s author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, theater and puppetry.

Lydia’s picture book, *Gerbs in the House: The Dilly Dally Bedtime Routine*, is now available. Find out if Mocha will ever get his silly son to sleep!

Germ-o-rama
by Lydia Lukidis

1. List the two main types of germs.

_________________________ and _______________________

2. In the article, you learned several characteristics of bacteria. Circle the characteristic of bacteria that was not mentioned in the article.
   
   a. Bacteria are creatures that can live inside and outside of your body.
   b. Bacteria cause diseases like the flu, measles, and chickenpox.
   c. Some kinds of bacteria are good for your body, like the ones that help with digestion.
   d. Good bacteria are also known as “probiotics”.

3. Germs travel around in a lot of ways. In the box below, circle all the ways that germs are spread according to the article.

   - coughs
   - vitamins
   - sleeping
   - saliva
   - sneezes
   - vaccines
   - breaths
   - showering
   - sweat
   - blood
   - objects
   - smiles

4. Give one way you can protect yourself against germs. (Use a complete sentence.)

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. ____________________________ p o c r i e m s o
   hint: a device used to see really tiny things

2. ____________________________ b o o k d r o n
   hint: the part of a door that you turn to open

3. ____________________________ g e y i n h e
   hint: things you do to stay healthy and clean

4. ____________________________ t i s i n t e s e n
   hint: long tubes in your body that help you digest food

5. ____________________________ m o n p n e u i a
   hint: a disease that causes the lungs to get inflamed

6. ____________________________ t a r i b e c a
   hint: tiny creatures that live inside or outside your body; can cause infections

7. ____________________________ s u v i r
   hint: a tiny form of living matter that can only survive inside you; can cause diseases

8. ____________________________ s i s t e s u
   hint: thin paper squares you use to clean your nose
In the article “Germ-o-rama”, you learned about different kinds of germs and some of the diseases they cause.

Research one disease that is spread by germs. On the lines below, describe the disease, list some of the symptoms (such as a runny nose), and explain how to treat the disease.

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ANSWER KEY

Germ-o-rama
by Lydia Lukidis

1. List the two main types of germs.
   bacteria and viruses

2. In the article, you learned several characteristics of bacteria. Circle the characteristic of bacteria that was not mentioned in the article.  
   a. Bacteria are creatures that can live inside and outside of your body.  
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   - coughs  - vitamins  - sleeping  - saliva  
   - sneezes  - vaccines  - breaths  - showering  
   - sweat  - blood  - objects  - smiles

4. Give one way you can protect yourself against germs. (Use a complete sentence.)
   Wash your hands with soap often.
The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. **microscope**  
   **p o c r i e m s o**  
   **hint:** a device used to see really tiny things

2. **doorknob**  
   **b o o k d r o n**  
   **hint:** the part of a door that you turn to open

3. **hygiene**  
   **g e y i n h e**  
   **hint:** things you do to stay healthy and clean

4. **intestines**  
   **t i s i n t e s e n**  
   **hint:** long tubes in your body that help you digest food

5. **pneumonia**  
   **m o n p n e u i a**  
   **hint:** a disease that causes the lungs to get inflamed

6. **bacteria**  
   **t a r i b e c a**  
   **hint:** tiny creatures that live inside or outside your body; can cause infections

7. **virus**  
   **s u v i r**  
   **hint:** a tiny form of living matter that can only survive inside you

8. **tissues**  
   **s i s t e s u**  
   **hint:** thin paper squares you use to clean your nose