

Kindergarten Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to tell what you know about ants. You will answer the question:

What do you know about ants?

Day 1 *Get ready to write.*

- Background Knowledge: Provide an introduction to the classroom activity by indicating that after this activity, students will be writing an essay focused on the topic of Ants. Ask students to share orally what they might know about Ants. Possible questions could include:
“Have you ever seen an ant? What do ants look like? Where do ants live? How do ants get food? What else do you know about ants?”
- Watch the video, *Fire Ants* at <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/wd-ep4-ants?source=searchvideo> (Teachers start the video early to skip the add before class)
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: What did you learn about ants?
- Listen to the story: *Ants* by Margaret Hall (below).
- What other facts do you know about ants? Turn and talk to a partner, make a list of what you know in pictures or in words.
- Listen to your teacher read and look at the facts page about ants (two pages below). Write or draw what you remember.
- On a piece of paper, write your name, grade and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

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What do you know about ants?

Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to the story Ants by Margaret Hall again, and then share what you wrote or drew with a partner.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay that answers the question: What do you know about ants?

Your focusing question for this assignment is

- **What do you know about ants?**
- Be sure to use facts and examples from the article and the video.

Remember, a good informative paragraph:

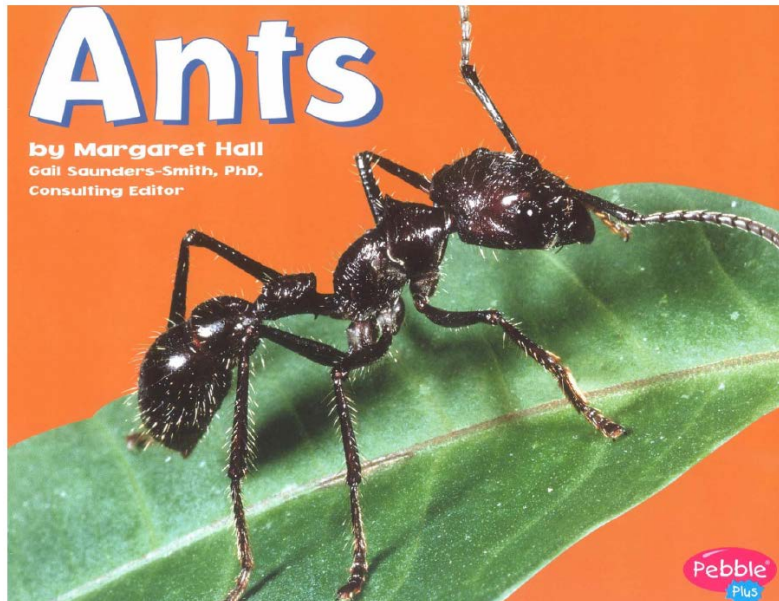
- *Gets readers attention in the beginning*
- *Talks about the topic*
- *Has an ending*
- *Uses facts to talk about the topic*
- *Ends sentences with punctuation*
- *Uses capital letters for names and at the beginning of a sentence*

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

**Kindergarten- Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt
Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found at <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/wd-ep4-ants?source=searchvideo>
Please skip the short advertisement and close any pop-up advertisements before you start showing the video to the class.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt, the facts article, and the story. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying as needed.
- The article provides information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least **twice** before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the article while writing and to take notes.
- The prompt should be given in **two** sessions. Allow 45 minutes for each session. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help initially, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. The teacher may add dictation from the students after they have completed their writing. Please **DO NOT** let students have access to their papers after you have started writing on their paper.
- Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find. Please do not have students rewrite a final copy.



Ants

What are ants?

Ants are insects.

How Ants Look

Ants are about the size of a sunflower seed.

Ants have six legs.

Most ants have black or brown bodies. Ants also can be other colors.

Ants have sharp jaws. Ants chomp and chew with their jaws.

Ants have two antennae. They touch, smell, and listen with their antennae.

What Ants Do

Ants live together in big colonies.

Ants work together. Some ants build nests under the ground.

Queen ants lay eggs. Worker ants take care of eggs.

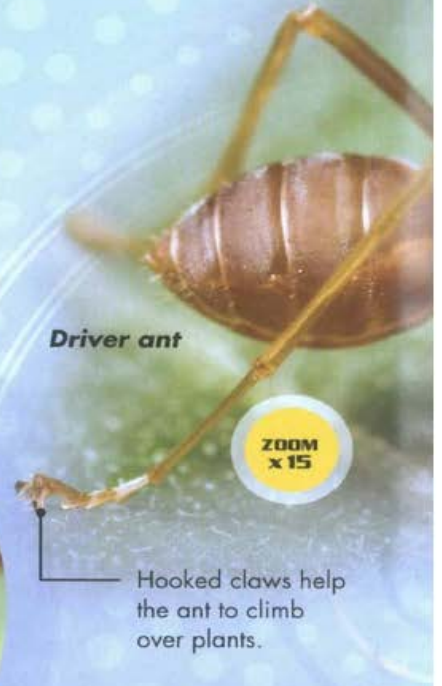
Worker ants find food. They carry leaves, fruit, and other insects back to the nest.

ANTS UNITED

The menacing face of an ant hides a brilliant brain. These little bugs have bigger brains than any other insect, with 250,000 brain cells each. Their real intelligence, however, comes from the way ants work together. Scientists think that a **colony** of ants operates like a super-brain. A colony can make decisions, working together in the same way that the cells inside our brains coordinate their efforts.

Ready for action

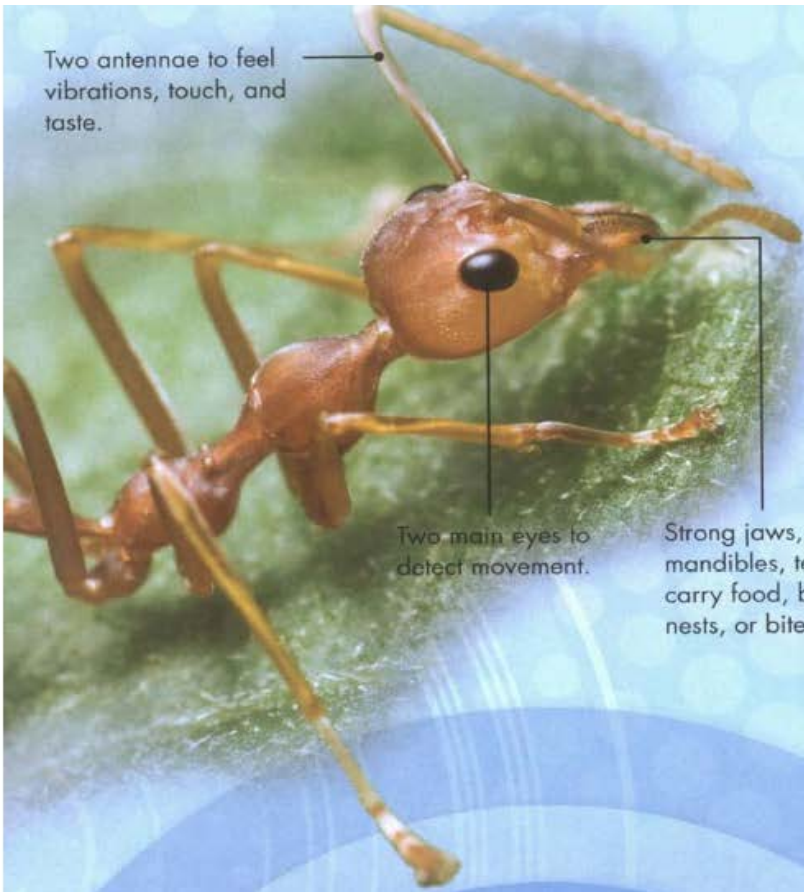
Ants have two main eyes, which can detect movement, and three smaller eyes, called ocelli, which are better at detecting levels of light. Their main sense, however, is smell. Strong jaws, or mandibles, can be used to tear and carry food, build nests, or bite prey.



It is...

a queen herdsman ant, leading her colony to a new nest. From time to time, a queen decides to lead her whole colony nearer to food supplies, and a new nest is built. The colony may contain more than 10,000 workers and 4,000 larvae and pupae.





Two antennae to feel vibrations, touch, and taste.

Two main eyes to detect movement.

Strong jaws, or mandibles, tear and carry food, build nests, or bite prey.

FACTOID

Driver ants are the largest ants in the world. Working together, a colony attacks every animal in its path—including snakes and people.



VITAL STATISTICS

Common name	Driver ant
Latin name	<i>Dorylus nigricans</i>
Size	2 inches in length
Habitat	Rain forests and grasslands
Special feature	Can live in colonies of 20 million ants



ZOOM
x 14

Job share

Ants are called social insects because they live and work together. One queen lays all of the colony's eggs. Worker ants are wingless females (left) that do all the chores, including fetching food, nest-building, and taking care of the eggs. Male ants grow wings and create swarms at mating time.