

Click®

The Dirt on Dirt

More than an irresistible material for play, dirt is an important part of many animal lives. Burrowing animals are provided shelter and warmth, as well as a safe hiding place. Dig in to this month's issue of CLICK magazine and don't be afraid to get a little dirty!

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How is dirt useful?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the various reasons why animals wallow in the mud.
- Students will learn about a variety of animals that make their home underground.
- Students will learn how animals in the wild dig their burrows.
- Students will interpret animal behaviors.
- Students will obtain information relating to the homes of underground animals.
- Students will study the structure-and-function relationship.
- Students will teach others how mud is the essential ingredient in the adobe brick-making process.
- Students will make a craft that demonstrates their knowledge of oviparous animals.
- Students will complete sentence frames using similes.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core STEM skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

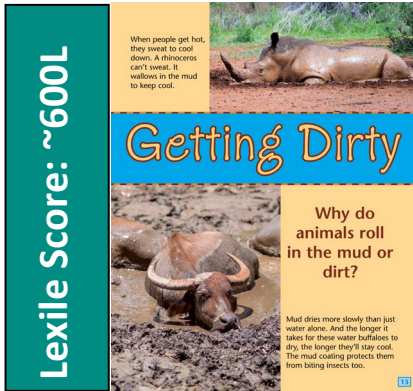
SELECTIONS

- **Getting Dirty**
Expository Nonfiction, ~600L
- **Beneath Your Feet**
Realistic Fiction, ~590L
- **Dig It**
Expository Nonfiction, ~620L

Getting Dirty

pp. 13–15, Expository Nonfiction

Getting dirty isn't just for kids! Colorful photographs accompany this simple text that teaches young readers why animals wallow in the mud.



RESOURCES

Interpreting Behaviors: Muddy Buddies

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the various reasons why animals wallow in the mud.
- Students will interpret animal behaviors.
- Students will teach others how mud is the essential ingredient in the adobe brick-making process.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **wallows** (p. 13) rolls around or lies down in mud, sand, dirt, or water
- **coating** (p. 13) a layer that covers the outside of something

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How is dirt useful?

Motivate students to learn about mud by using music. Play a recording or a YouTube concert of singer/songwriter Rick Charette's catchy song "I Love Mud!" This silly children's song acknowledges every kid's secret desire to play in the mud. The song uses repetition, rhythm, and rhyme to get kids singing along. Simple hand gestures can accompany the song.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary terms. Demonstrate how to infer the meanings of new words by using context clues and background knowledge. Then students work with a partner to determine the meaning of each word. Reveal definitions.

1. My dog is dirty because she was wallowing in the mud.
2. My ice cream has a coating of sprinkles all over it.

READ & DISCUSS

Lead a post-reading discussion using the following questions:

1. How do people cool down when they are hot?
2. Why do birds prefer using powdery dirt to get rid of bugs?
3. Where do animals find mud?
4. List three things that mud can protect animals from.

SKILL FOCUS: Interpreting Behaviors

INSTRUCT: This article presents detailed information about why different animals roll around in dirt and mud. Present the *Interpreting Behaviors: Muddy Buddies* graphic organizer to students. Tell students they will need to unscramble the animal word, complete the sentence, and then draw a picture to accompany the sentence. Encourage students to consult the article to ensure accuracy.

ASSESS: Review the *Muddy Buddies* organizer with the class and have students locate and circle the two vocabulary words on the worksheet. Invite students to do an "art walk" around the classroom to appreciate their classmates' drawings.

EXTEND

Social Studies Use videos on the internet and books to teach students how homes and buildings around the world use mud as a primary construction ingredient. Help students learn how simple ingredients—water, straw, sand, clay soil—are combined to make bricks. Have students create a drawing that illustrates the process. Then have them use simple words to label their drawings. Challenge students to use it to teach someone at home how mud is used to make adobe bricks.

Muddy Buddies

Interpreting Behaviors

1. Unscramble the name of each animal.
2. Then write the animal name on the line.
3. Complete the sentence showing how the animal uses mud or dirt.
4. Then draw a picture of the animal.

This is a picture of a **ezrba**.

Animal: _____

It rolls in the dirt to get _____.

This is a picture of a **sohrrenico**.

Animal: _____

It wallows in the mud to keep _____.

This is a picture of a **cehehat**.

Animal: _____

It rolls in the dirt to mask its _____.

This is a picture of an **phantele**.

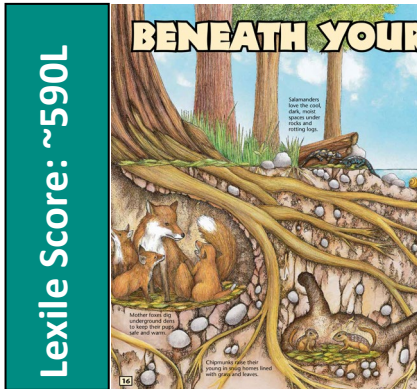
Animal: _____

It rolls in the mud to protect it from getting burned by the _____.

Beneath Your Feet

pp. 16–19, Expository Nonfiction

A hidden world of animal homes lies right beneath our feet. This article allows readers to take a peek at this underground world and its variety of dwellings.



RESOURCES

Identify and Classify: Happy Homes

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about a variety of animals that make their home underground.
- Students will obtain information relating to the homes of underground animals.
- Students will make a craft that demonstrates knowledge of oviparous animals.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **shallow (p. 17)** not deep; not far from top to bottom
- **burrow (p. 18)** a hole or tunnel dug by a small animal, typically to use as a home
- **runways (p. 19)** narrow passageways made by animals

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How is dirt useful?

Ask students to name animals that live underground. List responses on the board. Then ask students where each of these creatures lives: skunk, snake, fox. After students have contributed their answers, reveal the surprising answer. These animals also make their home underground! Introduce “Beneath Your Feet.”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post the key terms and definitions. Read them aloud and discuss meanings. Distribute a piece of drawing paper and have students draw a horizontal line across the paper 1/3 of the way down to represent the surface of the ground. Demonstrate if necessary. Instruct students to create a picture that illustrates all three words. Invite students to share their work and to use the three vocabulary words (a **burrow**, a **runway**, and a **shallow** hole) when presenting their drawing to the class. Compare the drawings to the drawings throughout the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the details in the article by using the following prompts to direct discussion.

1. Why is an underground den a safe place for fox pups?
2. How do snakes stay warm in cold weather?
3. Why do some parent birds pretend to have broken wings?
4. Which animals build their nests in burrows left behind by other animals?
5. What are 3 reasons why animals make their homes underground?

SKILL FOCUS: Obtaining Information

INSTRUCT: Elicit from students that the main idea of the article is to teach readers about a variety of animals that make their home underground. Present the *Identify and Classify: Happy Homes* graphic organizer. Tell students they will use the words and pictures in the article to decide which animal each sentence on the worksheet describes. Demonstrate how to use the color key, if necessary. This may be done verbally for very young students.

ASSESS: Turtles don’t live underground but they do hide their eggs there. Challenge students to locate the section of the article that explains why turtles do this. How do other animals hide their eggs?

EXTEND

Biology Explain that animals that lay eggs are called “oviparous animals.” Ask students to name the oviparous animals they learned about in the article. Then read aloud Ruth Heller’s picture book *Chickens Aren’t the Only Ones*. Next, give each student a large egg-shaped piece of white paper and have them cut it into two pieces as if it had cracked open. Have them glue the halves onto another piece of paper, leaving space between the two halves. In the space between the halves, have them draw and label an animal that might hatch from the egg.

Happy Homes

Classify Information Use the words and pictures in the article to decide which animal each sentence describes. The color key below tells you which color to shade the box. Some colors are used more than once.

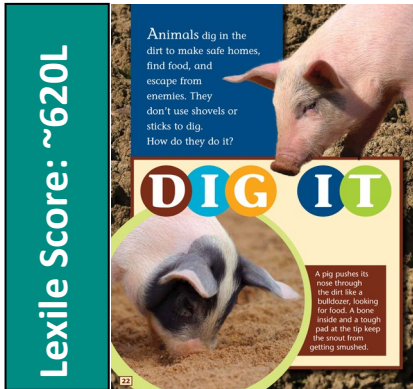
SNAKE (green)	SALAMANDER (red)	KILLDEER (yellow)	MOLE (brown)	WASP (orange)
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They look for worms to eat in shallow runways a few inches below the surface.	Hundreds of them may share the same underground bed all winter.
They love the cool, dark spaces under rocks and rotting logs.	They scratch out shallow nests on the ground.
Sometimes they build nests in burrows left by other animals.	They pretend to be hurt to lead enemies away from their nest.
They use deeper tunnels for nests and protection.	Their nest hangs from plant roots that reach down into the burrow.

Dig It

pp. 22–26, Expository Nonfiction

Without the aid of shovels or sticks, many animals dig in the dirt for a variety of reasons. Young readers will learn how animals use their bodies to dig in the ground.



RESOURCES

Structure and Function: Burrowing Bodies

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how animals in the wild dig their burrows.
- Students will study the structure-and-function relationship.
- Students will complete sentence frames using similes.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **snout** (p. 22) the nose of an animal that sticks out (sometimes includes the mouth and jaws)
- **claws** (p. 23) sharp, curved nails on the toes of an animal
- **webbed toes** (p. 25) toes that are connected by skin

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How is dirt useful?

Activate prior knowledge by asking students to share experiences they have had digging in the dirt, playing in a sandbox, or making mud pies. Perhaps some students have helped plant a tree or some seeds or flowers. Guide students to identify and describe the tools that helped them with their task. Explain that “Dig It” explains how animals use different body parts to dig holes and burrows.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Discuss the key vocabulary words and definitions with your students. Ask them to identify what these three words have in common (they name animal body parts). Invite students to discuss how human and animal bodies are alike and different. Instruct students to circle other words in the article that belong in the category “Animal Body Parts.”

READ & DISCUSS

Lead a post-reading discussion based on the following questions:

1. Why do animals dig in the dirt?
2. What keeps a pig’s snout from getting crushed?
3. Why do most burrowing animals have short legs?
4. How does a wombat’s backward-facing pouch protect the baby?
5. How does an earthworm move?

SKILL FOCUS: Structure and Function

INSTRUCT: This article provides readers with detailed descriptions of unique body parts that allow certain animals to constructively dig in the dirt. Present the *Structure and Function: Burrowing Bodies* graphic organizer. Tell students they will use information from the article to write and draw about how different body parts help animals dig.

ASSESS: Circulate and have mini-conversations with students as they are working. Remedial readers may work with a partner to reread the text. Collect and review students’ work to further assess their understanding of the structure-and-function relationship.

EXTEND

Language Arts Tell students that a simile is a figure of speech that compares two unrelated things using the word *like* or *as*. Writers use similes to make their writing interesting and memorable. Display this sentence from article page 22: “A pig pushes its nose through the dirt like a bulldozer.” Ask students what the pig’s nose is being compared to and why. Then display the sentence frames below and have students complete them. Invite volunteers to read their similes aloud.

Benny swims like a _____.

The new car shines like a _____.

Amy ran fast like a _____.

Burrowing Bodies

Structure and Function Gather information from the photographs and words in the article to explain how each of the body parts listed below helps the animal to dig in the dirt.

Animal's Body Part	Show/use pictures (What does it look like?)	Tell/use words (What does it do?)
snout (pig)		
webbed toes (badger)		
scraper (spadefoot toad)		
beak (puffin)		