

# Compost Observation Journal

## Subject: Decomposers, Compost at Home

Watching nature do the “rot” thing can be amazing with a little patience. Try these observations with a compost bin. Use this journal to record your decomposing observations and check out the resources included too!

You can find instructions on how to make your own compost bin in the 5th grade section of our educational resources page at [www.roseville.ca.us/explore](http://www.roseville.ca.us/explore).

**Grade:** 5th

**Time:** 3 - 5 observation sessions, about 15 minutes each

**Vocabulary:** decomposers, compost, food scraps, soil, fungi, bacteria

**NGSS:** 5-LS2-1. Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers and the environment.

### Materials List

1. This observation journal
2. Compost bin
3. Pen, pencil or crayons

*Appreciation to Alameda County Waste Management Authority and Source Reduction and Recycling Board for notes on compost critters and images. See Do The Rot Thing at [www.cvswwmd.org](http://www.cvswwmd.org).*



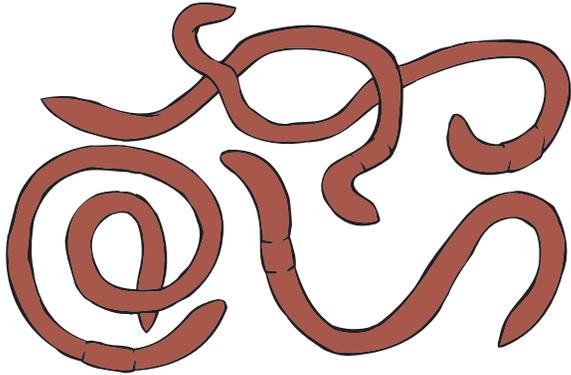
# My Compost Observation Journal

By: \_\_\_\_\_



# Compost happens... do the rot thing!

First step, make a schedule of how often you're going to observe your compost. Weekly? Daily?

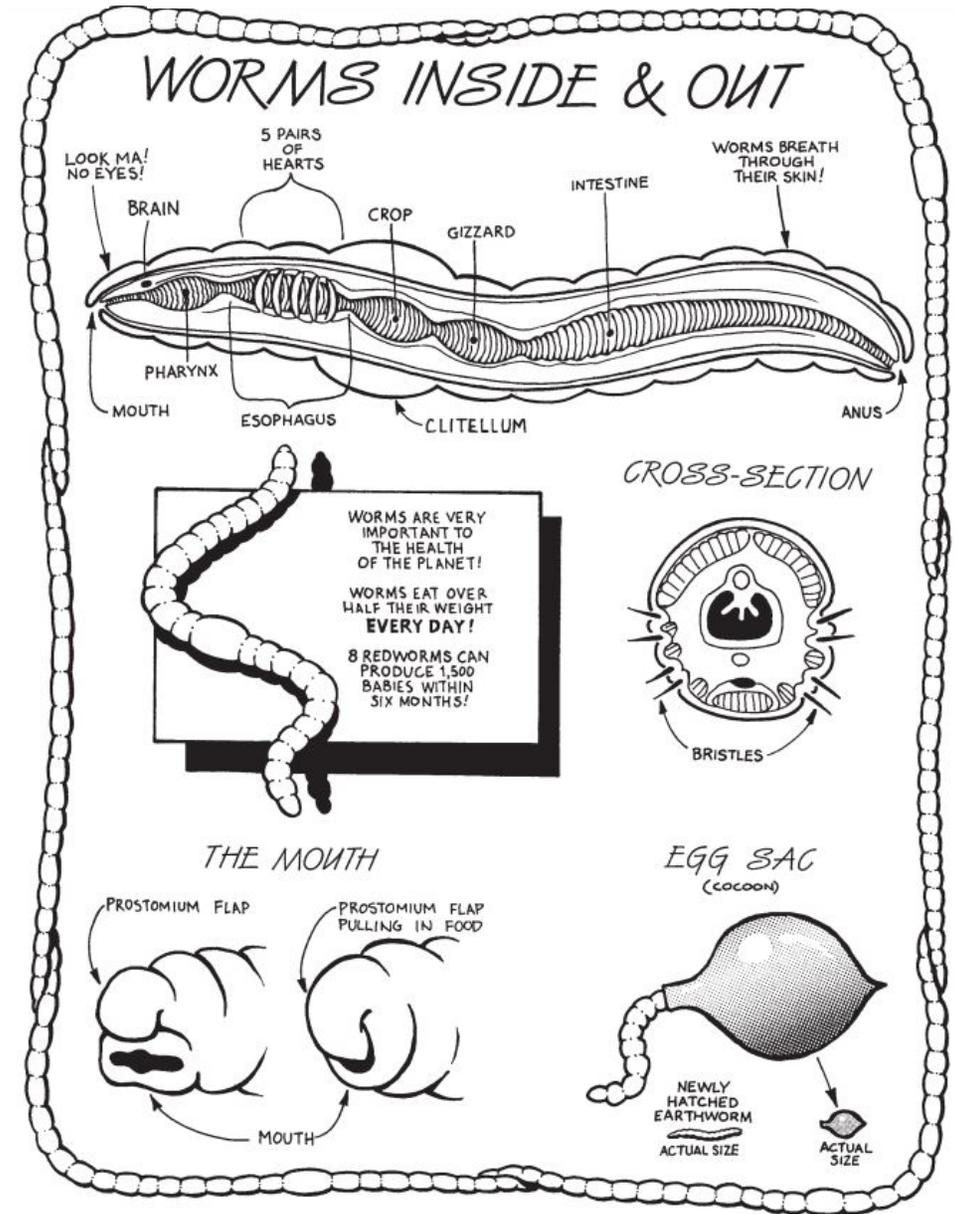


Then, complete the observation sheets in this journal to keep track of the changes you see over time.

Make a quick drawing to remember the things you see and jot down a few notes or describing words to remind you of your other senses. What do you smell, hear, feel?

Some questions to ponder:

- Does my compost look wet?
- Are the contents in my compost dark or light in color?
- Can I see any of the critters found in the compost critters list on pages 5 and 9?
- What do I think the temperature is of the inside of my compost? Warmer or cooler than my house?
- Other questions?



Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw what you see	Notes and observations

Questions:

Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw what you see	Notes and observations

Questions:

Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw what you see	Notes and observations

## Compost critters!

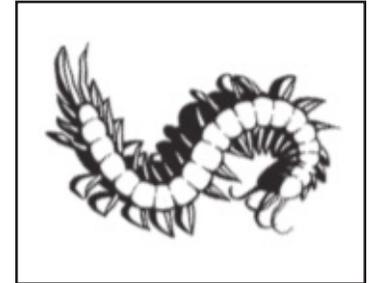
### Pill Bug or Roly Poly

I am an isopod, which means I have ten pairs of legs that look very similar to each other. I eat old leaves and veggie scraps. I am about ½ inch long and I roll up in a ball if I am disturbed. Some people think I look like a little armadillo. I am a grayish, dark color.



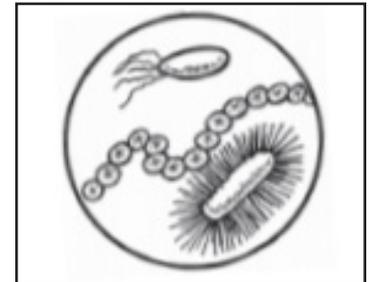
### Centipede

I move quickly on my many legs. I have 15-137 segments with a pair of legs on each. I am a fierce hunter. I love to eat earthworms. I use my pair of poison claws to keep my prey from getting away. I am about 1 to 2 inches long. I am usually reddish brown.



### Bacteria

I am so tiny that you can't even see me. I am everywhere. I am colorless. I can eat almost anything. Some of us live together in groups and others don't.



Questions:

Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

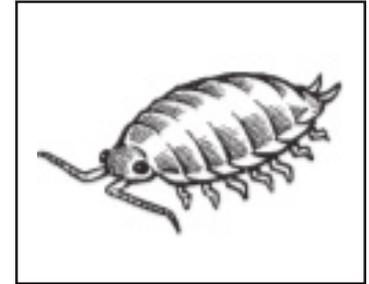
Draw what you see	Notes and observations

Questions:

## Compost critters!

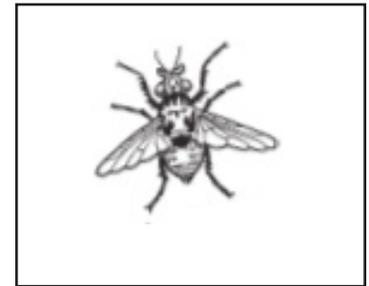
### Sow Bug

I have 10 pairs of legs. That makes me an isopod like my cousin the Roly Poly. I eat vegetation and old leaves. My ½-inch body is oval and flat with flattened plates, but I can't roll up into a ball like Roly Poly. I am related to crayfish and lobsters. I breathe with gills so I must live in a damp, moist place. I am a dark, grayish color.



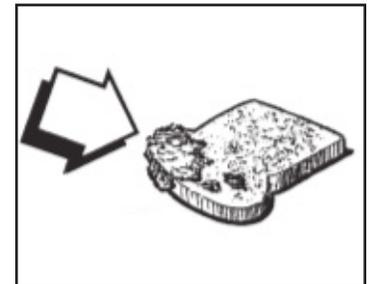
### Fruit Fly

I am a very small fly. People don't like me, but I don't bite, sting or buzz. I don't harm earthworms either. Sometimes you will see me around a worm bin if a person forgot to bury their food. I like to lay my eggs where it's moist and warm.



### Mold

I am a fungus. I am related to mushrooms. Most of us live on old food. You might see me on old food in your home or your worm bin.





DRAW A CIRCLE AROUND THE GREENS AND A SQUARE AROUND THE BROWNS.

