

Earthworm Observations



Hold the clear cup up to the light and look at your earthworm. What can you see inside its body?

- You may see bits of dark soil passing through the worm's digestive track.
- You may also see the dark red blood vessel going down the length of the worm.

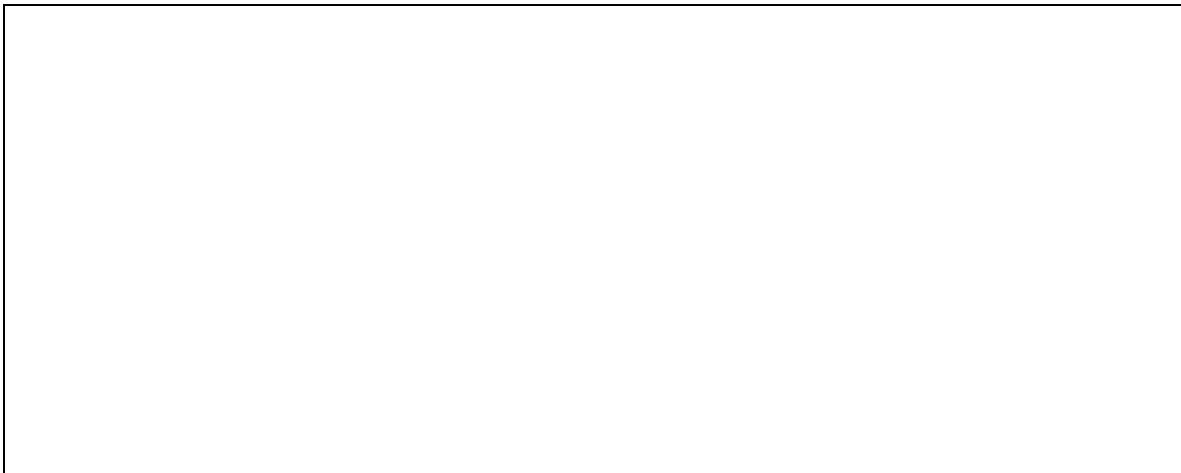
Place the earthworm on the paper plate.

- Touch it. How does it feel?
- Observe the worm as it moves. Describe its movement.
- Which end of the worm do you think is the front? Why?
- Observe the worm with a hand lens. What do you notice?

Earthworms do not have a nose, eyes, or ears. To gather sensory information about their environment, they “feel” their way through the soil. You will notice that the worm's body is divided into segments. Some types of worms have over 100 segments. How many does your earthworm have?

- How would you describe the color of your worm? How might its color help it to survive?
- Locate the thickening or swelling of the worm's body about one-third of the way down from the front end. This is called the *clitellum* and is also referred to as the *saddle*. It is only found on adult worm. The clitellum plays an important role in reproduction. (The clitellum is not noticeable on some types of worms.)
- Run your fingers along the underside (ventral side) of the worm. Do you feel small bristles? These are called *setae*. What do you think the function of the setae is?

Draw a picture of your worm:



Other Investigations:

- Place a damp paper towels and a small tunnel made from black construction paper on the plate Put the worms in the middle of the tray. Predict what you think the worms will do. Observe which materials the worms move toward.