

## 7

## Finding Out

In this unit, you'll learn how to find out about a topic and write an information text.



### Soil



When the Earth first formed about 4600 million years ago, it was covered with blazing hot rock. Gradually it cooled down. Over millions of years, rain, wind and ice eroded the surface of the rock. When organic matter in the form of decomposed plants and animal remains was mixed with rock fragments, soil was formed. Soil is constantly being created and added to the Earth's surface. It can also be rapidly destroyed by careless farming and logging methods.

Soil contains many living things, which all help the soil in some way. Plant roots hold in moisture and prevent the soil from being blown or washed away. Ants, worms, centipedes and other animals drag organic matter down into the soil, which, along with their body wastes, enriches the soil. As these animals feed on organic material they start the decaying process. Bacteria in the soil continue the process by breaking down the organic matter into the mineral salts that plants need to grow.






*from Planet Earth by Joanne Jessop*







### 3 Responding to the text

Read *Soil* and answer questions from the  ,  or  section.

- 1 When was the Earth first formed?
- 2 In what ways can soil be destroyed?
- 3 How do plant roots help the soil?
- 4 How do bacteria help the soil?

- 1 What grew on Earth 4600 million years ago?
- 2 Which of the following best describes what the weather did to the rock:
  - a) battered
  - b) covered
  - c) wore away.
- 3 How can we tell that the author thinks that people are to blame for destroying the Earth's surface?
- 4 Why do ants, worms and centipedes drag the organic material into the soil?

- 1 What was the Earth covered with when it was first formed?
- 2 What eroded the surface of the rock?
- 3 In what way are earthworms like tiny ploughs?
- 4 Why is it important that the soil contains bacteria?

#### Remember!

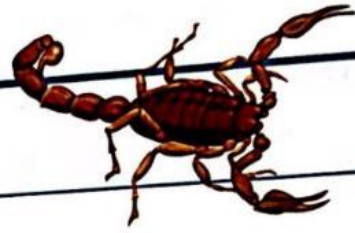
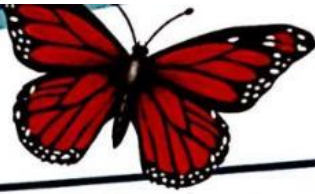
Use **Scan**, **Locate**, **Read** to help you find the answers.

- **Scan** for the key words.
- **Locate** them in the text.
- **Read** the text carefully for the information you want.



### 4 True or false?

Work in pairs. Use *Soil*, or another information text in your classroom, to make up some true or false statements. Write these statements down. Join up with another pair and read each other's statements. Decide if they are true or false by rereading the information text carefully.



## 1 Alphabetical order

Put these words in alphabetical order.

splat sight slimy snout speed silk slugs snail spider single



Put these words in alphabetical order.

wings bee snail worm butterfly scorpion sight spider savage



Put these words in alphabetical order.

spider slugs snail silk slurry silt spike sludge silent snake



## 2 Scanning for key words



- When reading a fiction book we read every word. This is called **detailed reading**.
- When looking for information we often use a much quicker kind of reading called **scanning**, where we look for **key words**.
- Once we have found those words, we use detailed reading to find out what we need to know.

① Read *Soil* and scan the text for key words. Which words do you know? Which ones are you unsure about?

② Copy this chart and use a dictionary to find the meanings of words you are unsure of.

Word	What I think it means	What it means
<i>organic</i>	<i>something in the soil</i>	<i>formed from living things</i>







## 5 Using different types of information

Information can be shown in many different ways, such as:

- text
- charts
- diagrams
- maps.

Look at these four different pieces of information about the harvester ant. Put the information together into one format. For example:

- a short paragraph
- a chart.

When you're finished, swap your work with a partner. Look closely to see that all the information has been included in your new version.

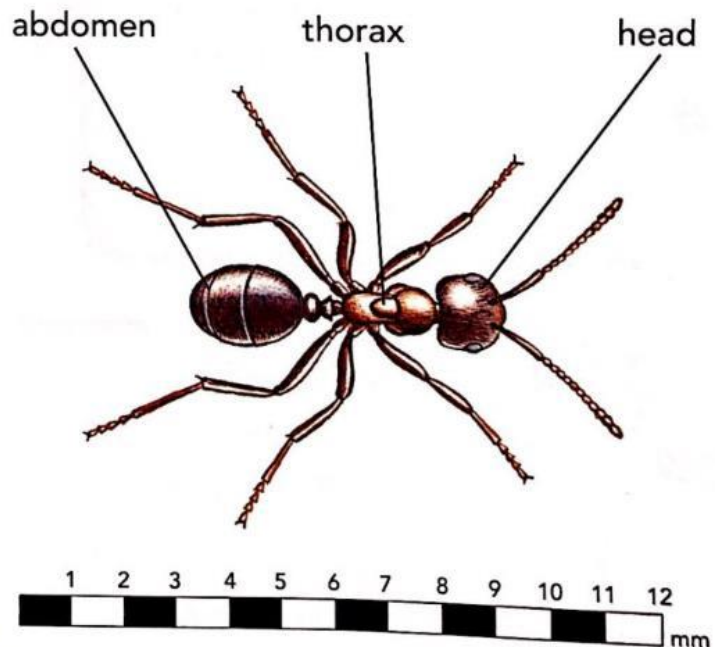
Write a short paragraph using two of these different types of information.

### The harvester ant

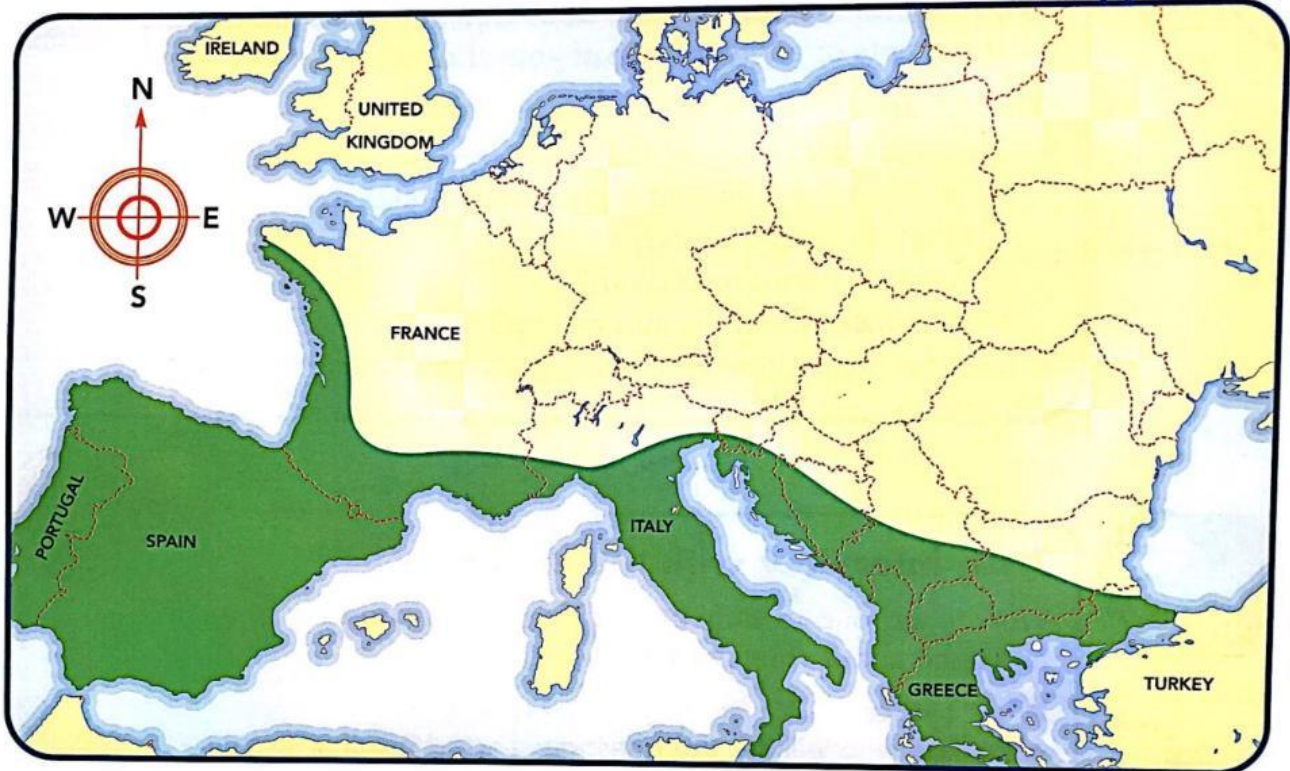


A harvester ant drags a seed to its underground nest.

### Diagram of the harvester ant



### Where harvester ants live



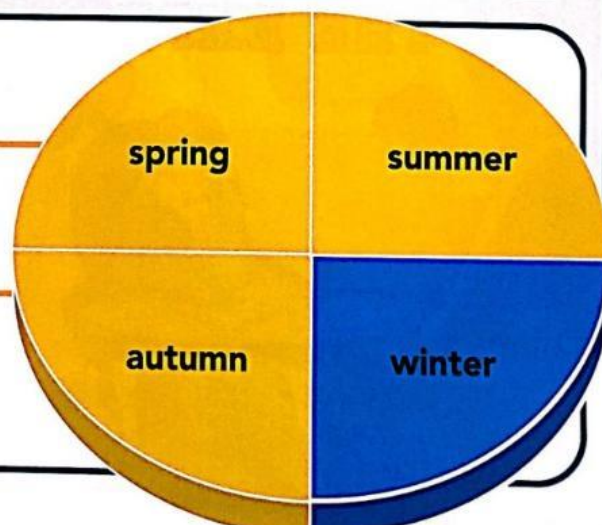
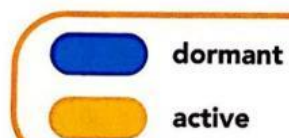
Harvester ants live in:

- grassy places
- sand dunes.



This shows the area they live in

### Seasonal activity of the harvester ant



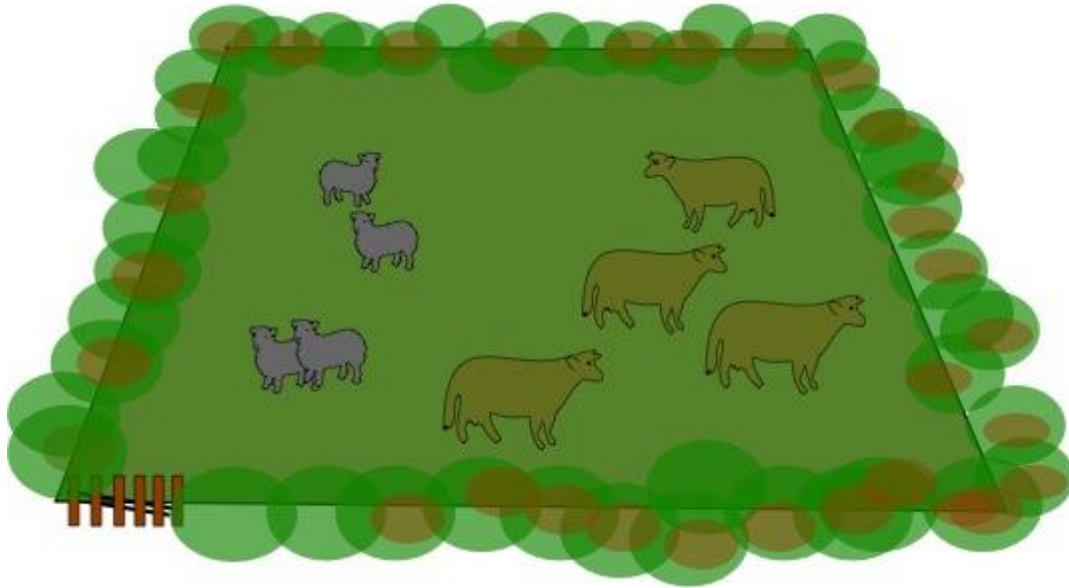
#### Glossary

dormant – asleep, not active



# Cows and Sheep

Age 7 to 11



In this field we could say, because of the number of animals there, that each cow can see 4 sheep and 3 (other) cows. This could be worded as follows "Each cow can see one more sheep than cows." There are obviously 4 sheep and 4 cows in the field as you see it. But here are some questions about different fields in which you have to find out how many sheep and cows there are in each field.

In field number 1, each cow can see twice as many sheep as cows; each sheep can see the same number of sheep as cows, so how many cows and sheep are there?

In field number 2, each cow can see three times as many sheep as cows; each sheep can see the same number of sheep as cows, so how many cows and sheep are there?

In field number 3, each cow can see twice as many sheep as cows; each sheep can see one more sheep than cows, so how many cows and sheep are there?

In field number 4, each cow can see twice as many sheep as cows; each sheep can see two more sheep than cows, so how many cows and sheep are there?

In field number 5, each cow can see three times as many sheep as cows; each sheep can see twice as many sheep as cows, so how many cows and sheep are there?