



## DIY ACTIVITY

### MAKE AN ANT FARM GRADES 3-5

#### OBJECTIVES

- Build a habitat for a colony of ants.
- Observe interaction within the group of ants.
- Experiment with changing variables within the habitat and observe the effect.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Place the lid on the smaller container and place it inside the larger container. Add sand around the smaller container to fill the larger container about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
2. Use the skewer to create some tunnels through the sand.
3. Before adding the ants, place the tube into the refrigerator for a few minutes to slow the ants and reduce risk of stinging.
4. Experiment with adding water or food, such as apple slices.
5. Use the pin to make tiny holes in the lid for the larger container and close it to keep ants contained.
6. Observe the behavior of the ants. Do they work together? Does each fend for itself?

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Two different-sized plastic containers with lids, the smaller should fit inside the larger
- Sand
- BBQ skewer
- Apple
- Water
- Tube of ants (order online from companies such as Ants Alive or Amazon for less than \$5)
- Pin

#### WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

Ants live in groups called colonies. They each play a role in a larger community. Together they build systems of tunnels for shelter and to protect their young (larva). They also work together to collect food and bring it back to the developing larva.

#### FURTHER EXPLORATION

Adjust the variables inside your ant colony. Try providing different types of food or changing the number of ants in the colony.

- ⚠ Use caution when transferring the ants—they can bite. Also, keep the ant colony contained with the lid so ants do not escape.