



# Wiggling Worms

## Living Things

### Grades P-1 & 2-3

Learn all about red wigglers and how they move! Try moving like a worm and making your own squishy paper model.

#### Background Information

Red wigglers are a special type of worm. They help to break down leftover food to make soil that's full of healthy nutrients plants need to grow. They're called red wigglers because they're red and they wiggle! We can wiggle too, but not in the same way. Our bones give us the support we need to move around, but they're solid and rigid between our joints. Worms don't have bones. They have muscles and tiny hairs to help them move and squirm using their whole body.

You can find where many of their muscles are if you look between each line on the worm. We call these parts between the lines a segment. They are like little circles of muscle around its insides. Worms also have longer muscles along the length of their body. Worms also use tiny hairs called setae to help them move (you say this like "see-tee"). Worms use the setae to grab onto the dirt while using their muscles to move (*See diagram below*). Worms like to move mouth-first so they can taste what's around them and find the best food. Here's how:

- The worm reaches forward, mouth-first by squeezing its segments. This makes the worm long and thin.
- The worm grabs onto the dirt with its tiny hairs (setae) at the front of its body.
- The worm squeezes its long muscles make it get thicker and shorter. This moves the back part of its body.
- Now the worm uses its setae at the back of its body to grip the dirt
- The worm is now ready to repeat all the other steps to keep moving mouth-first, starting with stretching out long and thin.



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## Background Information Cont.

Worms can also move backwards by reversing these steps. This happens if they sense something they don't like. Fun fact, they can also squeeze their muscles in different segments to wiggle or even lift their head up off the ground!

Can you move like a red wiggler? Remember to stretch, squeeze, and wiggle! You can use your fingers and toes to pretend they are the tiny hairs grabbing onto the dirt! Let's make our own red wiggler out of paper with the craft below to learn more about how they move!

## Materials

- Printed worm template (page 5) or colored/blank paper to draw your own
- Scissors
- Colouring supplies (crayons, markers, or coloured pencils)

## Instructions

1. Colour in your worm template.
2. Follow the dashed line to cut out your worm.
3. Fold your worm along each of the solid lines like an accordion.
4. Now your worm is ready to move! Squish up and stretch out its segments.

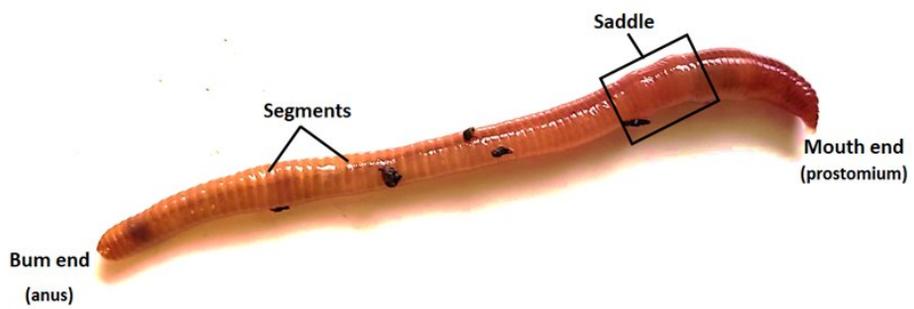


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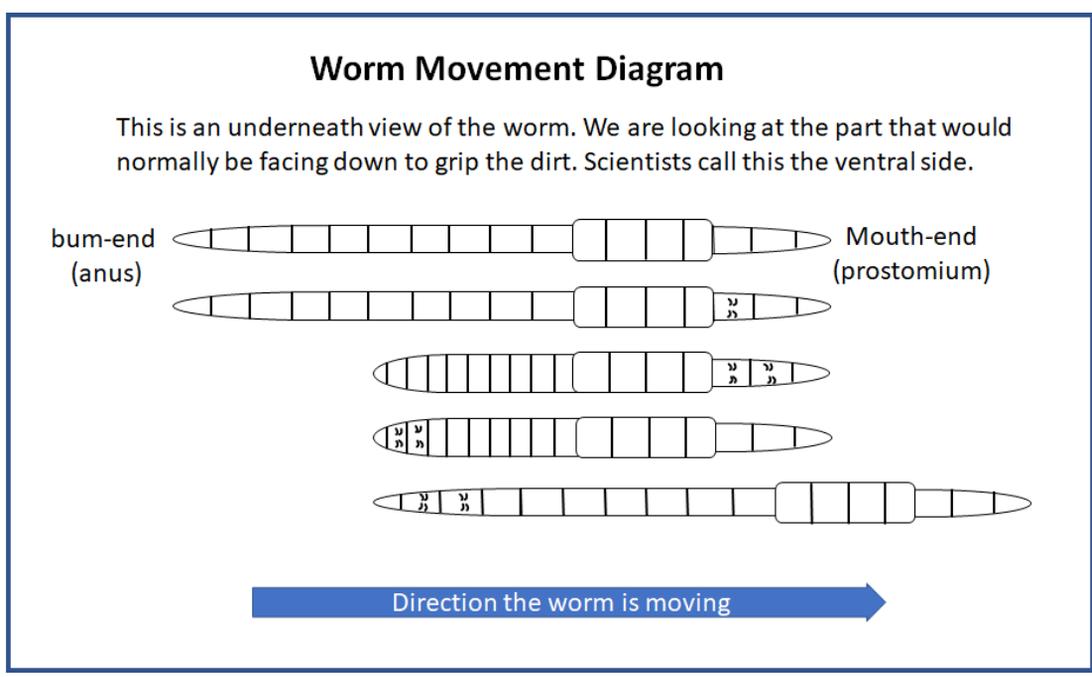


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## Diagram: Worm Body Parts



## Diagram: Worm Movement





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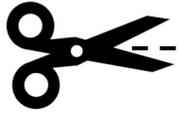
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## Tips for Success

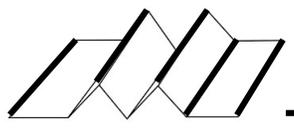
- Color your worm before you cut so there's less mess if you go outside of the lines.
- Color your worm template on both sides if you don't want to see the white paper when its folded.
- Be careful when cutting out your paper worm. Make sure your fingers holding the paper are far away from your scissors.

## Questions for Reflection & Activity Extensions

- Create a diorama of the worm's environment/ home using materials you can find.
- Can you move like a worm? How do humans move differently than worms?
- See if you can find a worm outside and find its parts (segments, mouth-end, bum - end/anus). Make sure your fingers are wet before touching the worm and be gentle!
- The best time to find worms at the surface is after a rainfall. You could also dig one from the ground or a garden (with adult permission, and remember to be gentle).



Cut along dashed line



Fold on solid lines

