EARTHWORM OBSERVATION GUIDE

1. What shape is the earthworm?
2. What color?
3. How long is it? (How did you measure it?)
4. Does the earthworm have legs? eyes? ears? nose? mouth? stripes?
5. Is there a difference between the top side of the worm and underneath? If there is, what is it?
6. Is there a difference between the front end of the worm and the tail? If there is, what is it?
7. How does the worm's skin feel?
8. Are there any other special features that you notice?
9. How does the worm move?
10. How fast does it go?
11. Does the worm ever move backwards?
12. What happens when the worm meets another worm?
13. What happens when the worm comes to a hole?
14. What does the worm do when it comes to an obstacle like a rock or a big clod of dirt?
15. Do you think the earthworm has a skeleton? Why or why not?
16. How long does it take the worm to burrow under the ground and disappear?
17. Where did you find the worm? Was it under the ground or on top, out in the open or covered up with something?
18. What else was in the vicinity where you found the worm? (Soil, rocks, sand, puddles, insects, polar bears, other animals, rusty bedsprings, or what?)
19. What did the worm do when you dug it up or uncovered it?
20. If you held it in your hand, what did it do then?
21. Surprises: Leave some space to write down observations you didn't think of beforehand, and questions you forgot to ask.

From Earthworms, Dirt, and Rotten Leaves, by Molly McLaughlin. Macmillan Publishing: New York, NY, (1986).

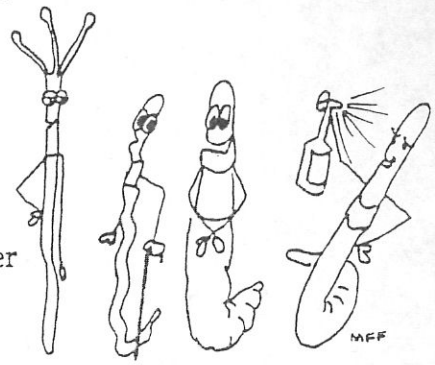
Name_____

Measure a Worm

Wormformation

The length of an earthworm depends upon several factors:

- What kind of worm it is
- How old it is
- How well-fed it is
- Whether its body has enough moisture



Materials

- moist paper towel
- ruler with metric and inch scales
- toothpick
- shallow dish of water
- small tray
- 1 live worm

Introduction

If you have observed a worm carefully, you know that even a well-fed, adult worm whose skin is glistening with moisture can vary in length. When a worm stretches out, it is long and skinny. When a worm contracts, or squeezes up, it is shorter and thicker. Measuring the length of a worm can be a challenge. With practice and a cooperative worm, you should be able to get a reasonably accurate measurement which you can share with your class.

Directions

Slightly moisten a paper towel. Get a worm from its container and rinse it off in the dish of water. Place your toothpick under your worm in the water and transfer it to the moist paper towel.

To measure your worm, use the toothpick to guide the worm into a straight line. Then, quickly mark the moist towel at the anterior end and posterior end of the worm. Measure the distance between the two points and record your figures on the chart below. Repeat this technique for the other measurements.

	Length in Inches	Length in Centimeters	Width in Inches	Width in Centimeters
Stretched out				
Contracted				
Sum				
Divided by 2				
Average				

Bonus Activity Measure more worms. Make a graph of the results.