



# hands-on lessons that

## Counting Critters

Encourage creativity and reinforce number recognition and counting with these colorful critters!

**Grade Level:** PK-2

### Objectives

Students will recognize numbers and demonstrate an understanding of counting.

Students will understand that living things are classified according to their attributes.

Students will understand that scientists who study insects are called entomologists.

### Literature Selections

*Icky Bug Numbers* by Jerry Pallotta

*Anno's Counting Book* by Mitsumasa Anno

*Ten Black Dots* by Donald Crews

### Skills

counting, number recognition, fine motor skills, classification

### Set up and Prepare

#### Content Overview

Introduce the lesson with *Icky Bug Numbers* by Jerry Pallotta. As you read the story aloud, be sure to share the realistic illustrations and interesting facts about insects. Allow time for students to find bugs with two antennae, six legs, ten spots, etc. Ask students to think about how they might sort or categorize all of the bugs in the book. Write the word entomologist on the board or chart paper. Explain that scientists who study insects are called entomologists, and one of the largest groups of living things is insects.



Explain to the students that they will create a set of "counting critters" to demonstrate their understanding of numbers.

### Materials

Elmer's® School Glue, Elmer's® Glitter Glue, Elmer's® Squeeze 'n' Brush Painters, large craft sticks, feathers, jiggly eyes

### Preparation

Cover the work surface. Provide a variety of paint and glitter glue colors to enable the students to create fun, colorful critters.

### **Directions**

Provide each student with the appropriate number of craft sticks. Younger students may be more successful with 5 or 6 sticks, while more advanced students may be able to create a full set of 10.

Instruct the students to paint each craft stick using a variety of paint. After the paint has dried, use a small amount of Elmer's School Glue to add jiggly eyes and feathers to the top of each stick.

Next, use Elmer's Glitter Glue to create counting dots on each stick. Allow to dry overnight so that the glitter glue will not be disturbed.

When the glitter glue is dry, students will be able to feel each dot as they count them. This tactile experience reinforces the cognitive process for many students enabling them to connect an abstract concept with the sense of touch.



### **Lesson Extensions**

Let students show off their critters with a simple activity. Say, "Show me two," and ask them to hold up the counting critter with 2 dots. Very quickly, you'll see which students can identify their numbers and which students cannot.

Create a center activity using Elmer's Dry Erase Foam Board and library pockets. Write a number word on each library pocket and glue the library pockets to the foam board. Ask students to place the correct counting critter in each pocket and write the number below the pocket using a dry erase marker.

Read the other suggested literature selections aloud to the students. As you read, instruct them to hold up the appropriate counting critter.

### **Standards**

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

CCSS: ELA-Literacy: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

CCSS: Math-Counting and Cardinality: Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.

CCSS: Math-Counting and Cardinality: Understand that the last number name said tells the number of objects counted. The number of objects is the same regardless of their arrangement or the order in which they were counted.