

## Moths and Other Pests

**Companion Text:** I Lost My Sock, by Lin Jakary & Ryan Olsen  
**Subject Area & Grade Level:** Science, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

### **Objectives**

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the life cycle of a moth
- Evaluate methods of pest control via class discussion

### **Staging Activity**

Read the story once through without stopping, and then return to the illustrations on page 1 & 36. Show the students these two pages, and ask them what they notice about the pictures. See if students can identify the presence of moths on the page. Ask, “What do you think it means that there are moths flying in and around the empty drawer? Why do you think the illustrator chose moths and not some other insect, like bees or grasshoppers?” Allow students to offer as many answers as they wish, and then move onto the core activity.

### **Core Activity**

Explain that moths are often shown in books and movies around old fabric that has not been tightly stored. There are many different types of moths, but the ones most commonly shown are the ones that eat natural fabrics, such as silk, wool, or cotton. Moths do not eat synthetic fabric, such as fleece, nylon, or polyester. So, if you see moths flying out of a closet, an old trunk in an attic, or in this case, the boy’s drawer, it is meant to show you that the moths have been eating whatever clothes were inside. Since moths also prefer dirty clothes to clean clothes, and clothes that have been left out in open rather than properly stored, the moths in these illustrations are meant to highlight that this boy has been careless with his socks.

Explain that moths eat the most when they are in their larval (teenage) stage. Ask students to recall and share with the person sitting next to them what they can remember about the life cycle of insects. Review that all insects begin as eggs, hatch into larvae, grow into pupae, and then reach adulthood. Moths have larval and pupa stages that look like those of a butterfly—the larval stage looks like a caterpillar, and in the pupa stage, the moth is cocooned and turns into a flying insect. Have students draw the life cycle of a moth. Ask why the moth eats the most in its larval stage. (In order to store up energy for the metamorphic transformation in its cocoon.)

### **Extension**

Lead students in a discussion of the following related questions: “What are some other pests beside moths?” (Other insects, rodents) “Beside your home, where are other places where it is important to control pests?” (Restaurants, food-packaging factories, farmers’ grain silos, grocery stores) “What are some things we do in our society to control pests?” (Limit access by keeping doors and windows well-sealed; Keep food stored tightly to reduce pests’ ability to find it; Work quickly to get rid of pests if prevention efforts fail so they don’t multiply) “Are all pest control methods safe?” (No, some chemicals used can be harmful to humans too.)

