

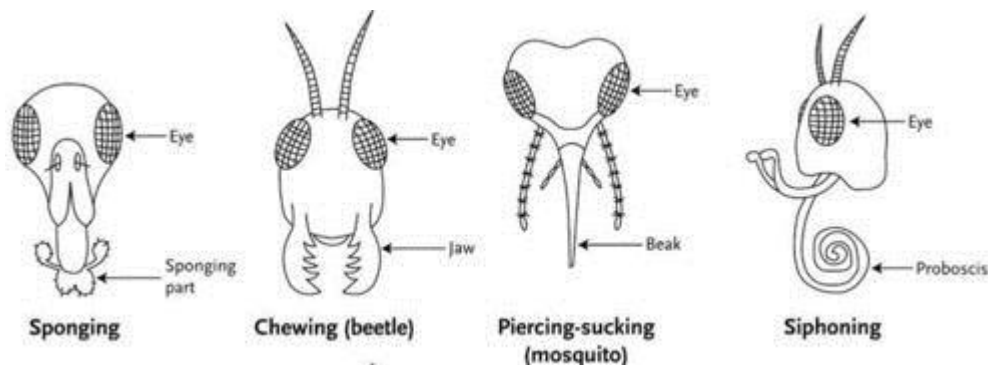
Insects

The majority of arthropods are insects (Class Insecta). In fact, more than half of all known organisms are insects. There may be more than 10 million insect species in the world, although most of them have not yet been identified. In terms of their numbers and diversity, insects are the dominant animals in the world.

Insect Traits

Like other arthropods, insects have three body segments and many jointed appendages. The abdomen (tummy) contains most of the internal organs. Six legs are attached to the thorax. (main body) There are several appendages on the insect's head:

- The head has a pair of antennae. Insects use their antennae to smell and taste chemicals. Some insects can also use their antennae to hear sounds!
- The head generally has several simple eyes and a pair of compound eyes. Simple eyes have a single lens, like the human eye. Compound eyes have many lenses.
- For feeding, the insect head contains one pair of lower jaws and two pairs of upper jaws. Insects have also evolved a wide range of specialized mouthparts for eating certain foods..



Insect Flight

The main reason that insects have been so successful is their ability to fly. They are the only invertebrates that can fly, and were also the first animals to evolve flight. It's a guaranteed means of escape from nonflying predators. It's also useful for finding food and mates.

Insects that fly have wings, like the dragonfly. Insects generally have two pairs of wings. They are attached to the thorax. The wings form from the exoskeleton.

Insects and People

Most humans interact with insects every day. Many of these interactions are harmless & often go unnoticed. However, insects can also cause humans a lot of harm. Some insects carry human diseases: the mosquito carries malaria, which kills millions of people each year. Many other insects feed on food crops. Growers may need to apply chemical pesticides to control them. But without insects to pollinate them, many flowering plants, including important food crops, could not reproduce.