

Name: _____

Seeing Red

By Katrina DeLallo

See that red bug crawling on that leaf?
That's a ladybug.

Why do we call ladybugs **lady**bugs? After all,
there are male ladybugs, too.

In the Middle Ages, nasty insects were destroying the
farmers' crops. When the Catholic farmers prayed to their Blessed Virgin Mary
(who is sometimes called "Our Lady"), asking her to get rid of the bad insects,



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black, and white.

Do you know why ladybugs are so brightly colored? It's because they are a little bit poisonous. Most vividly marked animals, like bees, are usually poisonous to some degree... think of the bee's stinger! If a ladybug is attacked it will ooze a yellow, bad-smelling, nasty-tasting liquid from its leg joints and the poison it gives out is enough to make a bird very sick! In fact, the next time you find a ladybug, pick it up and sniff it. Smell that faint, bitter odor? That's the ladybug's poison that smells.

Ladybugs are related to crustaceous (kruh-**stey**-shuhs) animals like lobsters. Isn't that weird, that ladybugs and *lobsters* are sort of like cousins? That's because lobsters and ladybugs are both classified as *arthropods* (**ahr**-thruh-pods), which are creatures with jointed legs. If you look closely you can see that a ladybug's legs are indeed jointed. A magnifying glass might help you in this experiment.

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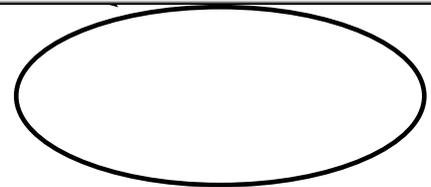
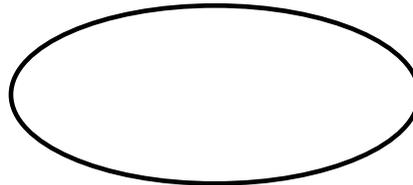
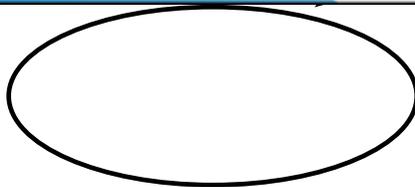


1. How did ladybugs get their name?
 - a. They ate farmers' crops in the Middle Ages, so farmers prayed for them to go away.
 - b. In the Middle Ages, ladybugs reminded farmers of the Virgin Mary, known as "Our Lady."
 - c. In the Middle Ages, farmers prayed to the Virgin Mary to get rid of pests, and ladybugs appeared.



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3. What do all arthropods have in common?

4. How are ladybugs and bees alike?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. They both have stingers. | b. They are both slightly poisonous. |
| c. They both eat smaller bugs. | d. They are both a type of beetle. |

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