



Hello friends,

I am a beetle, and I'm a bit sad. Yes, yes, you've heard correctly. Have you ever seen a beetle? If not ... then you're a little distracted... Because we are more than 300,000 species! We represent a bit more than a quarter of the animal species on the planet.

In case someone didn't have the pleasure of meeting any of my fellows and isn't sure what I look like, I'll introduce myself: I'm an insect. (I hope you've said some typical human expression such as "Great! Good!" or "I finally have the chance to know one!". Much better than "Eeeew!", which is very common among you humans.

We are not very big, but we wear an elegant striped suit, which is actually a great skeleton made of chitin plates. Our body is rounded, our head is diamond-shaped and our legs are strong (very strong, I would say) and we use them for walking, for digging and for ... Oh no! I choose better another time to tell you about this because you may be eating now.... Ah! Of course we have antennae and ... Does anyone know how many legs we have? *(Note to the teacher: let them guess)* Exactly, we have 6! Our secret weapon is the sense of smell we use to ... Oh no! I choose better another time to tell you about this because you may be eating now....

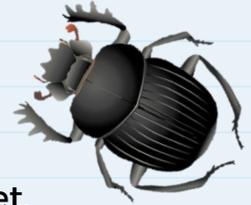
I've just built my new house in an earthy area. It is a very cosy ground floor and has many corridors. My friends and family live in that area as well, so I'm happy.

I'll confess why I'm worried: I don't know my name ... I know just the nickname ... and I have to admit that this is so annoying that ... I'd like to know my real name now! Gastón and Gastona have told me that you can probably help me.

Best wishes,

The dung beetle

Now that we know each other a little, I'll tell you more about myself.



I suppose that do this as well: we beetles take great care of our diet. Yes, we do, but we also have our vices ... we love that brown thing that is sometimes hard, sometimes soft ... Sure that you know what I mean, right? (Note to the teachers: let them say examples: Nutella? Chocolate?)

Eeeeeew! No, no, how disgusting, not that! What I mean is the delicious poop, of course! It's our favourite meal! Mmmmm ... But don't be scared, we are not only coprophagous. We know how important it is to have a balanced diet. Some relatives of other species also eat insects, fungi, fruit, even flower nectar.

And on the other hand, we are so tasty that there are other animals that love feeding on us... So we have to be careful, if we don't want to become the dinner of some bird or lizard.





Do not let yourself be carried away by appearances. Perhaps our small size and the fact of living underground makes us look insignificant ... but nevertheless, we carry out some very important functions. Our strange food provides other living beings with great advantages!

As we eat the excrement of other animals, we are the most efficient cleaning team in the area. And we avoid that flies come to visit us. They can transmit diseases to cows, cattle farmers, etc. By burying the manure we fertilize the soil. In addition, rainwater can flow through the long galleries we build avoiding runoff. Plant roots love finding water in the soil easily.

I also wanted to tell you that I have other relatives, for example a cousin who eats the bark of trees (*Ips typographus*)! And then there is my other cousin who loves relaxing at the beach (*Erodius gorgy*)!

It would be very interesting if you also get to know other very important animals. And I'm sure some of you are still wondering: why does this extravagant beetle carry an umbrella?

You've got it! Thank you very much for helping me! Congratulations!!

Now I feel much better 😊 and I love my name, full of personality. I'm very happy that I've met you. I hope we can meet again in this park, in your schoolyard or in far places ... Next time I hope you are friendly to me as you already know me!

You never know where you can find one of us!

Love,

Scarabaeus laticollis 😊

