

# THE SLUG

Elise Gravel



**ACTIVITY GUIDE**



TUNDRA BOOKS

DISGUSTING CRITTERS

# DEAR EDUCATOR

*The Slug* is a hilarious illustrated non-fiction book about the land slug. With the perfect blend of scientific fact and humor, this book will surely have students laughing and learning at the same time! The activities and discussion prompts that follow will help students check their understanding of this disgusting critter and use what they have learned to identify and describe some of the major physical and behavioral characteristics of the land slug, how it escapes from predators, and the important job it has in our environment.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ELISE GRAVEL** has always been fascinated by disgusting little creatures. At three-and-a-half, she founded the Organization for the Defense of Disgusting Critters, of which she was both president and the only member. Nowadays, when she's not busy petting a fly, worm, slug, rat, head lice or a spider, she writes and illustrates strange children's books.



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## BUT, WAIT!

Before sharing the book with the class, read out the following clues:

- I look a lot like a snail, but I don't have a shell.
- I don't have any legs.
- I am covered in a thick and slimy liquid.
- I play an important role in our environment.
- Who am I?

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Discover what your students already know about slugs. Consider using the following questions as prompts:

- Who has seen a slug before?
- What did you notice about it?
- Did it make any noise?
- Where did you see it?
- What else do you know about slugs?
- What do you want to know about slugs?



# SLIPPERY SLUGS

Show what you have learned about slugs. Circle the correct answer(s).

**Which one of the following is not a type of slug?**

Sea slug

Freshwater slug

Potato chip slug

Land slug

**How does a slug move?**

It blows air through a hole on its belly

It uses its wings to fly

It rides a bicycle

It moves the muscles in its belly

**How does a slug see?**

It has four eye tentacles

It has two eyes on the bottom tentacles

It has two eyes on the top tentacles

It cannot see

**What is all over a slug's body?**

Water

Mucus

Dirt

Scales

**What do slugs like to eat?**

Mushrooms

Broccoli

Grilled Cheese

Plants

The slug has to stay in **wet** / **dry** areas.

The slug's belly is called a **tummy** / **foot**.

Mucus is a **hard** / **slippery** substance.

# VOCABULARY LIST

Introduce and/or review the following terms with your students. Assign one of the vocabulary terms to individuals or pairs of students to present.

- Mollusk
- Species
- Tentacles
- Retractable
- Contract
- Mucus
- Humid
- Slick
- Predator
- Transparent
- Decaying
- Nutrients

## A SLIPPERY ADVENTURE

Write a short story about a slug that meets up with one of its predators. Given what you have learned from the book, explain how the slug escapes and use two other pieces of information that you learned from the book in your story. For example, include how the slug retracts its tentacles when it senses danger or uses its mucus to help stick itself to things so it can climb. Illustrate your story and include speech bubbles in the style of the author.

## SLUG, BUG, RUG

Brainstorm a list of all the words that rhyme with “slug.”

The slug moves by contracting the muscles in its belly. Brainstorm a list of real and imagined words that describe how a slug moves. For example, “A slug oozes across the ground.”

Slugs are covered in mucus. Brainstorm a list of real and imagined words that describe what mucus is like. For example, “Mucus is gooey.”

## SLUG HUNT

Visit your schoolyard or backyard and find a slug to examine. If you touch the slug, make sure you are gentle. Write a description of what you see. If you can, place a slug on a piece of construction paper and observe the trail of slime it leaves behind as it moves.

## SLUG FROM ANOTHER PLANET

If you were to describe a slug without mentioning its name, somebody might think you were describing an alien! Create and illustrate your own alien, based on a slug’s characteristics.

## SAVE THE SLUGS!

Design a poster that advocates for the protection of slugs. How do slugs benefit the environment?

# MOLLUSK, MOLLUSK

Snails and slugs are both mollusks. Do some research and compare and contrast land snails and land slugs using the following chart. Select the fifth criteria to compare.

	Land Slug	Land Snail
What does it look like?		
How does it move?		
Where does it live?		
Where does it eat?		

## FACT OR FICTION?

Ask your students to spread out along the wall of your classroom. Read out the following statements. If the statement is fact, students move a step. If the statement is fiction, they remain still.

1. A slug has six tentacles.
2. A slug's belly is called its foot.
3. Slugs need to stay in wet places.
4. Slugs produce extra mucus when they are happy.
5. Slugs do not lay eggs.
6. Slugs are both male and female.
7. You can see through baby slugs.
8. Slugs are helpful.

# INTERESTING OR DISGUSTING?

Write down two facts about the land slug that you found interesting.

1.

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2.

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Write down two facts about the land slug that you found totally disgusting.

1.

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2.

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Write down one more question that you have about land slugs.

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