

# Classification “What is a locust?”



When we classify animals we need to put them into groups. First of all we need to see if they are vertebrates, which mean that they have a backbone like us, or invertebrates which means that they don't have a backbone.

Is your locust **an invertebrate** or a **vertebrate**?

Locusts are also **Arthropods**. These are all of the small invertebrates with jointed legs and a hard skin called a cuticle. Arthropod actually means “Jointed Legs” in Latin.

Arthropods include insects, spiders, millipedes, centipedes and crustacea (like crabs).

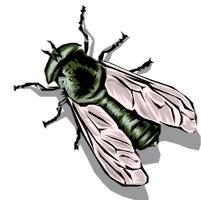
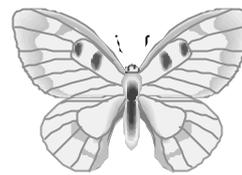
Insects have three main body parts, the head, thorax and abdomen. All insects have three pairs of legs and they have joints where the legs bend. Most insects also have one pair of antennae, compound eyes and one or two pairs of wings.

Do you think that locusts are **insects, spiders, millipedes, centipedes** or **crustacea**?

We can classify our locust still further!

There are lots of different groups of insects. We call these Orders. You may have heard of some of them:

Type of insect	Order
True bugs	Hemiptera
Beetles	Coleoptera
Fleas	Siphonaptera
True flies	Diptera
Butterflies and moths	Lepidoptera
Bees, wasps and ants	Hymenoptera
Grasshoppers and crickets	Orthoptera



Locusts are in the order **Orthoptera**. This includes grasshoppers and crickets. Locusts are large grasshoppers. There are lots of different types of locusts. We can also put them in more groups, but the smallest group is called a species. This only has one type of animal in it that is able to interbreed. All breeds of dogs, for example, belong to the same species because they can all breed with each other.

When scientists first started to classify plants and animals in the 17th and 18th centuries they wrote in Latin or Greek, which we still use today. If you could understand these languages then the words may help to describe the insect. Orthoptera actually means “straight wing”.

Our classification is: **Common name:** The desert locust  
**Scientific name:** *Shistocerca gregaria*

<b>Kingdom:</b> Animal
<b>Phylum:</b> Arthropoda
<b>Class:</b> Insecta
<b>Order:</b> Orthoptera
<b>Suborder:</b> Caelifera
<b>Family:</b> Acrididae
<b>Genus:</b> <i>Shistocerca</i>
<b>Species:</b> <i>gregaria</i>

