Activity 5: FACETnating

Have you ever looked at a picture with a friend and separately described what you saw? You both saw the same thing, but you probably explained the picture differently. You learn much about your world by looking. An insect has a compound eye and sees objects differently than other animals because of the way its eye is made. In this activity you will make a viewer, look through the viewer, and get an idea of how an insect sees the world through its compound eye.

MAKE it These Eyes

Tool Kit

- ☐ Drinking straws
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Red plastic sheet (clear)

When you look at a tree or person you see the whole tree or person. Insects look at a tree or person and see them divided into several thousand parts. The number of parts depends on how many facets make up each compound eye.

- Cut a handful of drinking straws in half and hold them together.
- Wrap the straws tightly with masking tape so they can stand on their own.
- You have just made a compound eye model.

USE it These Eyes

- Look at a picture through your compound eye model.
- Draw what you see.
- Find a red object or red letters and view through the red plastic.
- Look at the red object or letters through your compound eye model with the red plastic in front of it.

Life Skills

ENTOMOLOGY SKILL: Learning about insect eyes.

SCIENCE STANDARD: Insect form and function.

SUCCESS INDICATOR: Describe how an insect sees through a compound eye.

Talk It Over

SHARE WHAT HAPPENED:

- What do you see through the "insect" eye?
- How does the picture change from what your own eyes see?
- How do the red objects change when viewed through the red plastic?

APPLY: Do you think insects would be attracted to a red flower, if they can't see the color red?

GENERALIZE TO YOUR LIFE:

- Is it easier for you to describe things with words or with pictures? Why?
- If you have to describe something to someone, which helps more—a quick look or a long, careful one? Why?