



## ***Beetle Boy* learning activities**

Creative activities inspired by M.G. Leonard's novel *Beetle Boy*

**Age 8-12**

**CFE Second Level**

**Resource created by Scottish Book Trust**

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## About this resource

When his father mysteriously disappears from inside a locked vault at the Natural History Museum, Darkus Cuttle is determined to discover the truth. Darkus forms an unlikely friendship with a giant beetle called Baxter and together the pair set out to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. The search for his father leads Darkus on a dangerous adventure, bringing him face to face with the villainous fashionista Lucretia Cutter and uncovering a deadly plot which endangers not only Baxter but the whole beetle population. This resource is full of cross-curricular activity suggestions to help you explore *Beetle Boy* with your students. Adapt and use as you see fit!

If you are taking part in [Reading Schools](#), the activities in this resource could support delivery of Key Area:

- 1.5.1: Access to high-quality books
- 2.2.2: Interdisciplinary book projects.

## Learning activities

### Activity 1: Design a museum exhibition

SCN 2-01a, LIT 2-14a, LIT 2-28a, EXA 2-02a, EXA 2-03a

Beetles are amazing creatures! There are more than 350,000 known species of beetle in the world which can adapt to almost any environment. In this task your pupils will design an exhibition to showcase some of the amazing things beetles can do.

Split your pupils into groups and assign each group a different species of beetle which they will create a display about.

[This webpage has photos and facts](#) which pupils could use as a starting point to choose a beetle to learn about and gather information for their display.

Pupils can draw their beetle and make a life-sized model out of clay or plasticine.

They can also research online to find out as many amazing facts about their beetle species as possible.

Pupils can then use a beetle fact file to share information about their species including information about:

- Species Name
- Habitat
- Diet
- Distinguishing features
- Fantastic facts
- Special abilities

Once pupils have completed their beetle models/drawings and fact files they can be displayed as a museum exhibition. Your exhibition could also include a world map with the countries marked where each species of beetle is found.

Once the exhibition is complete you could invite parents and pupils from other classes to visit the museum. Your pupils can act as museum guides, showing other children round, explaining the exhibition and sharing their learning.

### Activity 2: Build a beetle hotel

LIT 2-05a, SCN 2-01a, HWB 2-13a

Beetles and other invertebrates might be small, but this makes them some of the easiest animals to accommodate in the playground or garden and their roles as pollinators and decomposers are essential to a healthy eco-system.

In this activity your pupils will research how to attract beetles and other mini-beasts

to your playground and build a beetle hotel which provides a perfect habitat for them to live in.

First show your class this short [National Geographic Kids](#) clip (1 minute, 15 seconds) about beetles and ask them to make a list of the different facts mentioned in the video.

What many types of beetles need are naturally occurring nooks and crannies and rotting wood which provide all the housing space they might need, like the damp log in the video.

The RSPB has a number of how-to guides with materials and instructions on how to make two different types of beetle hotels in your playground.

- [Build a bug hotel](#)
- [Make a beetle bucket](#)

Once your beetle hotel is complete, pupils can keep a weekly log of the different animals they find in the hotel.

The [RSPB has guides to different bug detective equipment](#) you can make to get a good view of insects without them running away. Remember to release the beetles back where you found them once you've finished looking at them!

### Activity 3: Lucretia Cutter fashion house

LIT 2-02a, LIT 2-14a, HWB 2-01a, EXA 2-02a, EXA 2-03a, EXA 2-05a

In this task your pupils will become fashion designers and create beetle-inspired jewellery for Lucretia Cutter's fashion house.

In the book, Lucretia Cutter's evil fashion house makes jewellery out of real beetles encrusted with jewels. You could use this as an opportunity to discuss animal cruelty and welfare with your pupils and to talk about respect and care for animals.

In this task your pupils will make animal friendly alternatives for the fashion house, designing jewellery inspired by the colours and shapes of beetles but using recycled materials.

First ask your pupils to research online to find pictures of beautiful and colourful beetles which they will use as inspiration for their jewellery design. They can print out and stick these pictures into a mood board or sketchbook.

Ask pupils to make drawings of the patterns and shapes they can see on the different beetles' bodies, for example the shape of an antennae or wing. Pupils can try using repetition of shapes to create interesting new patterns and designs.

Show your pupils some examples of contemporary jewellery design to give them inspiration and then ask them to have a go at designing their own piece of jewellery using shapes and colours inspired by the beetles. [This Pinterest board](#) has lots of examples of unusual jewellery that could inspire your pupils. They could make a necklace, earrings, badge or anything else, the more imaginative the better!

Next ask pupils to think about what kind of recycled materials they could use to mimic the colours and shapes of a beetle's anatomy and to stick some tests onto their mood board too. They could use coloured plastic, cellophane, glossy magazine paper, tin foil, buttons etc.

The final stage is to turn the design into reality! Using the materials and designs from their mood boards pupils can make their own beetle inspired jewellery.

- Follow up activities: Hold a fashion show or photoshoot to showcase your pupils' designs.
- Write a letter to Lucretia Cutter's fashion house advocating for the use of animal friendly materials in jewellery design.

#### Activity 4: Make a book trailer

TCH 2-04a, ENG 2-19a, ENG 2-24a, ENG 2-31a

Book trailers are a fantastic way of encouraging pupils to engage with a book and combine a number of different skills from the curriculum.

A book trailer is just like a film trailer, giving a taster of a book for its potential audience. You can find our resource on creating book trailers [on the Scottish Book Trust website](#).

Once your pupils have made their trailers you can hold a film screening - watching all of the trailers together. Encourage your pupils to discuss the trailers after they have seen them:

- How well has each trailer captured character, setting, atmosphere?
- Does the trailer make you want to read the book?

## Further resources

- For other Second Level learning resources, [use the 9-11 filter on our website](#)
- For more cross curricular projects, see our resources on [A Kind of Spark](#), [How to Train Your Dragon](#), [Scottish myths and legends](#), [Tidy](#) or [Who Let the Gods Out?](#)