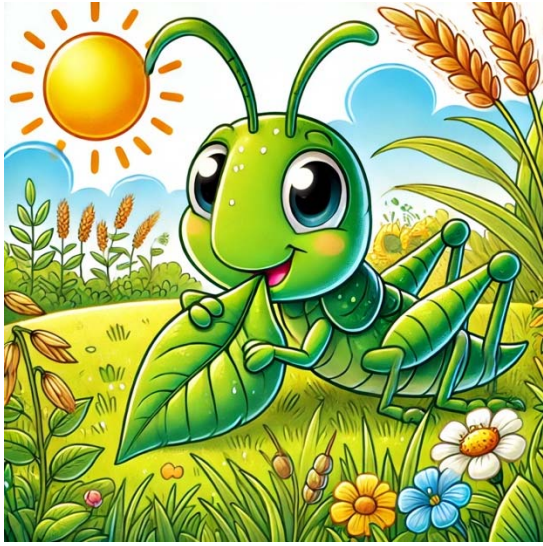


Name _____



What's on the Menu for Grasshoppers?

Grasshoppers are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. They love munching on grasses, leaves, and even crops like wheat and corn. Their sharp mouthparts, called mandibles, are perfect for cutting and chewing plants. Grasshoppers use these strong jaws to tear through tough leaves and stems, making them efficient eaters.

One of the grasshopper's favorite foods is fresh grass. In fields and meadows, grasshoppers hop around, eating all the green plants they can find. Some species enjoy eating flowers or seeds as well. Grasshoppers are not picky eaters—they'll eat almost any kind of plant they can reach!

Farmers sometimes worry about grasshoppers because large groups, called swarms, can eat up entire fields of crops. These hungry insects have huge appetites and can cause damage to food supplies. But grasshoppers also help the environment by eating overgrown plants, which keeps plant life balanced.

Grasshoppers find their food in simple ways. They use their large eyes and antennae to spot and smell plants nearby. Then they hop or crawl to the plant and start eating. Unlike predators, grasshoppers don't need to chase their food. They simply look for plants and take bites.

Even though they're small, grasshoppers play an important role in nature. By eating plants, they help control how fast plants grow. This benefits the entire ecosystem, as it keeps plant life from getting out of control. Grasshoppers are also a food source for animals like birds, frogs, and spiders.

So, while grasshoppers might seem like small, simple creatures, their eating habits make them important to the balance of nature. The next time you see a grasshopper munching on a leaf, remember that it's playing a big role in its environment.