

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## The Homes of Worms: Where They Live

Worms are small, soft-bodied creatures that can live in many different places around the world. From rich garden soil to the depths of the ocean, worms have adapted to survive in a variety of habitats. Their ability to thrive in so many places makes them an essential part of many ecosystems.

Most worms, like earthworms, prefer moist soil rich in nutrients. They are commonly found in forests, grasslands, gardens, and farms. These habitats provide the organic matter worms need to eat and the damp conditions that keep their skin moist for breathing. You can often spot earthworms in gardens or under fallen leaves, where they break down dead plants and enrich the soil.

In forests, worms burrow in the leaf litter and topsoil. They help decompose fallen leaves, turning them into nutrients that plants can use. In grasslands, worms do similar work, aerating the soil and creating tunnels that let water and air reach plant roots. Farmers often appreciate worms because they improve crop health by making the soil more fertile.

Some worms live in water. Aquatic worms can be found in freshwater rivers, lakes, and ponds, where they feed on organic debris. Marine worms live in the ocean, often burrowing into sand or mud on the seafloor. These worms play a crucial role in cleaning up underwater environments by breaking down dead plants and animals.

Not all worms are helpful. Some, like parasitic worms, live inside other animals, including humans. These worms don't need soil or water because they take nutrients directly from their hosts. Scientists study these worms to learn how to control the diseases they cause.

Worms are found on every continent except Antarctica. They thrive in environments that provide food, moisture, and shelter, making them one of the most widespread and adaptable groups of animals on Earth. Whether in your backyard or deep in the ocean, worms are hard at work keeping ecosystems healthy and balanced.