



Level 3

Suitable for:	young learners who have completed up to 150 hours of study in English
Type of English:	American
Headwords:	600
Key words:	11 (see pages 2 and 5 of these Teacher's Notes)
Key grammar:	possessive 's, <i>Have to</i> for obligation, quantifiers (<i>more</i>), simple adverbs, comparative adjectives, two clauses joined by <i>because</i>

Summary of the story

The ants on Ant Island work all the time to find food for the grasshoppers who bully them. The ants are tired of this situation. Flik, a young ant, wants to help, but he is always making mistakes. When Flik loses all the food that the ants have collected, he decides to go to the city to find some bigger bugs. The bigger bugs can fight the grasshoppers and the ants can live in peace.

In the city, Flik meets a group of big circus bugs. They agree to go back to Ant Island with him. The circus bugs don't understand that Flik wants them to fight the grasshoppers – they think that he wants them to perform for them! When the circus bugs discover the real reason for being on Ant Island, they are very scared. But Flik then comes up with a new plan ...

Grasshoppers are afraid of birds, so Flik, the ants, and the circus bugs build a big bird to scare the grasshoppers away. When the grasshoppers return to the island, the circus bugs perform for them. The bird then flies down toward the grasshoppers, but it crashes. Flik then realizes that *together* all the ants and circus bugs can fight the grasshoppers. The grasshoppers are suddenly afraid, and then a real bird flies down from the sky. The grasshoppers flee Ant Island and the ants can finally live in peace.

Background information

A Bug's Life is a Disney-Pixar animated movie. It was released in 1998 and was Pixar's second full-length movie production (the first was *Toy Story*). It was directed by John Lasseter and written by Andrew Stanton.

The story was inspired by Aesop's fable, *The Ant and the Grasshopper*. In the fable, a starving grasshopper who spends all his time singing begs some ants for food. The ants refuse as they have used their time wisely to store food for winter. The creators of *A Bug's Life* thought it would be interesting to turn this idea round so that the grasshoppers demand food from the ants.

The film was nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Original Score and won the Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition.

Did you know ... ?

The film makers used a "bug-cam" – a special camera – to learn how the world looks through a bug's eyes.

Ants are super-strong and can carry three or more times their own body weight.

The characters

Flik is an ant. He is very kind and funny. He tries to help, but he makes a lot of mistakes.

The ants live on Ant Island. They work very hard to find food.

The grasshoppers take food from the ants. They are not nice.

The circus bugs are funny and friendly. They want to perform for the grasshoppers.

Key words

(see page 5 of these Teacher's Notes for the Key words in context)

ant (n)

bug (n)

circus (n)

clap (v)

fight (v)

fool (v)

grasshopper (n)

perform (v)

plan (n)

real (adj)

together (adv)

Topics and themes

Work The ants on Ant Island work very hard to find food for the grasshoppers. Ask the students if the ants enjoy this work. Ask why not? What jobs do people enjoy doing? What work would the students like to do when they are adults? What work wouldn't they like to do?

Bugs What bugs are in the story? Can the students point to them in the book? Teach them the names in English of some of the circus bugs (*caterpillar, stick-bug, ladybug, beetle, spider*). Do the students like bugs? Which ones are their favorites? What do they know about bugs? (See also Activity 2 on page 3 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Food / Food chains The ants collect food for themselves and the grasshoppers. What food can the students see on page 3 of the book? What food do the students like to eat? Talk with the students about the concept of food chains. Explain that bugs are eaten by bigger or stronger bugs, birds, and animals, which are then eaten by other bigger or stronger animals. (See also Activity 3 on pages 3 and 4 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Teamwork When the ants and circus bugs work together they are able to win against the grasshoppers. Explain to the students that working together as a team is important for humans, too, in sports and other big projects, such as building

a large building. When have the students worked in a team? (See also Activity 5 on page 4 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Life in miniature Bugs see the world from a very different perspective. To them a flower looks like a tall tree. Can the students imagine what it would be like to shrink to the size of a bug? What would they see? They could draw some pictures or write about life from a bug's eye view.

Circuses Have any of the students been to a circus? What happens at a circus? What performers are there? What acts do they perform? The students could draw a picture of a circus and label the performers. (See also Activity 4 on page 4 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Never giving up Although Flik often makes mistakes, he never gives up and in the end he is successful. What do the students think about this idea? Can they think of another character from a story who never gives up? Is there anything that they can do now that they couldn't before, thanks to being persistent?

Class Activities (After Reading)

Here are some activities to do with your class after reading *A Bug's Life*.

1. Ant Island frieze

Materials: large sheets of green construction paper; sticky tape; smaller sheets of green / yellow red construction paper; safety scissors; sheets of blank paper; colored markers / pens / paints; glue

- Before the session stick 2–3 large sheets of green construction paper together with sticky tape to form a long strip. This is the background for the frieze.
- Make a leaf template and copy it onto the sheets of green / yellow / red construction paper. It could look like the *Bug's Life* leaf below:



- Show the students the picture on pages 12–13 of the book. Talk about the “frieze” painted by the ant children.
- Explain that the class is going to make a frieze with scenes from the story. First the students are going to cut out leaf templates to go around the edges of the frieze.
- Give each student some sheets of green, yellow or red construction paper with the leaf template.
- The students cut out their leaves with safety scissors and stick them to the edge of the frieze.
- Then they are going to draw / color / paint scenes from the story to go onto the frieze in the correct order.
- Ask the students what the most important scenes are from the story. Write these on the board in English.

- Allocate one scene to each pair / small group of students.
- The students draw or paint their scenes on blank paper. Then they write a sentence beneath their scene.
- They stick their scene to the frieze in the correct order.
- Display the frieze in the classroom. Talk about the scenes with the class.

2. My favorite bug

Materials: books about bugs (ideally in English); pictures of bugs downloaded from the internet; sheets of blank paper; colored pens / pencils; colored plasticine or modeling clay

- Talk with the students about the bugs in the story. Which bug is their favorite? Why?
- Show the pictures of real bugs to the students. What can these bugs do? Which ones do the students like / not like. Why?
- The students choose a bug and find out some information about it (this could be done as homework).
- They draw / paint a picture of their bug and write some sentences in English about it.
- Alternatively, they could make a mini-book about their bug with pictures / drawings and information about what it looks like (body parts), what it eats, does, lives, and any special features.
- They could also make a model of their bug with plasticine or modeling clay.

3. Food chain

Materials: pictures of each part in a food chain; blank sheets of paper; safety scissors

- Before the session research a food chain to work on with the class. For example: grass → grasshopper → small bird → snake → eagle.
- Find some pictures to illustrate the food chain.

- Copy the pictures onto one sheet of paper (they should be mixed up for the students to put into order), then make a copy for each student in the class.
- Talk with the students about food chains. Explain that in a food chain bigger / stronger animals eat the smaller / weaker animals. Some animals in a food chain eat plants and other animals only eat meat.
- Give a sheet of paper with the pictures to the students.
- The students cut out the pictures, label them, and put the food chain into order.
- Talk about the food chain with the students. What is the correct order?
- Ask the students if they can think of other food chains or parts of food chains.

4. Circus tricks

Materials: pictures of circus acts downloaded from the internet and / or clips of circus acts; props such as hoops, balls, jump ropes, face paints, etc. (optional)

- Talk with the students about the different acts you can find in a circus, such as jugglers, tightrope-walkers, fire-eaters, trapeze artists, clowns, etc.
- Show the students some pictures or clips of circus acts and tell them the names of some of them in English.
- Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4. Ask them to create their own circus acts. You could provide some props, if desired, such as hoops, balls, jump ropes, face paints for clown faces, etc.

5. Raft game

Materials: four gym mats (or hoops or sacks if playing the variation)

- Divide the class into two equal teams and give each team two gym mats.
- The teams stand at one end of the gym / yard.
- Explain to the teams that the floor is the sea and the mats are boats. The aim of the game is to reach the other side without touching the "water."
- The students in each team work together to move their mats and themselves to be the first to arrive at the other side.
- If any students touch the floor, their whole team goes back to the beginning.
- Encourage the students to use as much English as they can while they play. (*Well done! Pick up the mat. Come on! We're nearly there.*) Also commentate on the game if you can in English.
- Variation: use smaller mats, sacks, or hoops – one player then has to go back to bring more students to the other side.

Key words

ant The ants on Ant Island are always working. (p. 3)

bug A bug's life is difficult. (p. 3)

circus The circus bugs are funny, but they are also big and strong. (p. 11)

clap The ants clap to say thank you to the circus bugs. (p. 22)

fight The circus bugs can fight the grasshoppers! (p. 9)

fool The bird is *great*, but can it fool the grasshoppers? (p. 16)

grasshopper .. The grasshoppers arrive and they are very angry because there is no food for them. (p. 5)

perform [The circus bugs] do not want to fight the grasshoppers. They want to perform for them. (p. 13)

plan Now the grasshoppers understand Flik's plan. (p. 19)

real The bird is not real! (p. 19)

together They are small, but *together* they are big and strong. (p. 20)

While-Reading activities

Activity 1 (pages 3–7)

Match. Draw lines.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 The ants on Ant island are always working | a and he can find bigger bugs. |
| 2 Flik tries to help | b but he makes a lot of mistakes. |
| 3 The ants can't fight the grasshoppers | c but they let him go. |
| 4 Flik can go to the city | d because the grasshoppers are bigger and stronger. |
| 5 The ants do not like Flik's idea | e because they have to find food for the grasshoppers. |

Activity 2 (pages 8–11)

Write the words in the sentences.

fight excited find help fun understand

- 1 Flik is _____ because there are a lot of big, strong bugs in the city.
- 2 The circus bugs are loud and _____ and BIG!
- 3 The circus bugs can _____ the grasshoppers.
- 4 The circus bugs do not _____ Flik's idea.
- 5 The ants have to _____ more food for the grasshoppers.
- 6 Perhaps the circus bugs can _____ the ants.

Activity 3 (pages 12–15)

Write *T* (*True*) or *F* (*False*).

- 1 The grasshoppers welcome the circus bugs to Ant Island. _____
- 2 The ant children give a big picture to the circus bugs. _____
- 3 The picture shows the circus bugs ... they are performing. _____
- 4 The circus bugs want to fight the grasshoppers. _____
- 5 Grasshoppers are afraid of birds. _____
- 6 Flik wants to make a very BIG bird. _____

Activity 4 (pages 16–19)

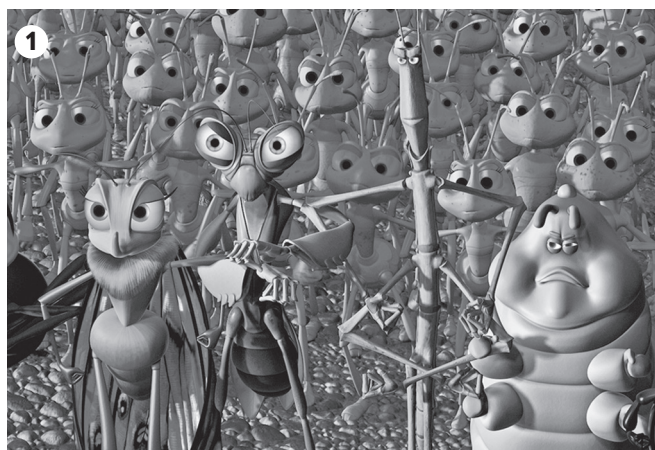
Order the sentences.

- a The bird flies up, then it falls down. ☐
- b The ants and the circus bugs make a big bird. ☐
- c The bird is not real and the grasshoppers are angry! ☐
- d The circus bugs perform for the grasshoppers. ☐
- e The grasshoppers come back to Ant Island. ☐

Activity 5 (pages 20–22)

Copy the correct sentence next to the picture.

- a A bug's life can sometimes be fun!
- b Together the ants and circus bugs can fight the grasshoppers.
- c A big hungry bird is looking at the grasshoppers and it is coming closer!







After-Reading activities

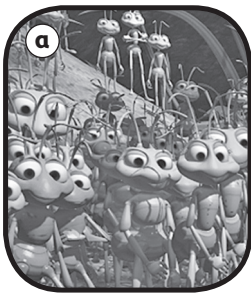
Activity 1

Find fifteen words from this story.

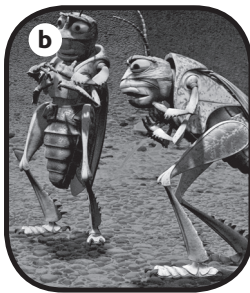
ant grasshopper bug bird circus food excited scared angry fight perform together mistake fool funny

Activity 2

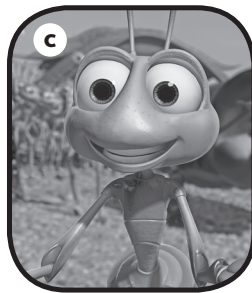
Write the correct words under the sentences.



ants



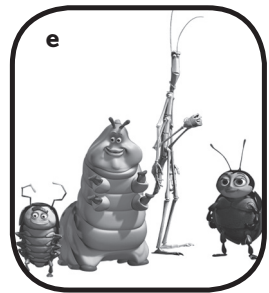
grasshoppers



Flik



real bird



circus bugs

- 1 They come and take food from the ants.
.....
- 2 They are tired because they have to find food all day.
.....
- 3 They are big and strong, but they are also funny.
.....
- 4 He wants to help, but he makes a lot of mistakes.
.....
- 5 It is big and hungry and it scares grasshoppers!
.....

Activity 3

Cut then order the sentences.



- a** The ants and circus bugs make a big bird.
- b** The grasshoppers are angry because there is no food.
- c** Together the ants and circus bugs can fight the grasshoppers.
- d** Flik goes with the circus bugs to Ant Island.
- e** The ants are happy now – their life does not have to be difficult.
- f** The ants work all day to find food for the grasshoppers.
- g** The grasshoppers watch the circus bugs.
- h** Flik goes to the city and meets the circus bugs.
- i** The bird falls down and down.
- j** A real bird arrives and the grasshoppers run away.
- k** The food falls! Now there is no food for the grasshoppers.
- l** The circus bugs are scared because they don't want to fight.

Answer Key

In the back of the Reader

Before You Read

1 1 No 2 Yes 3 Yes 4 No

2 There are 5 circus bugs. There are 2 ants.

After You Read

1 Answers along the lines of: The ant children are showing their picture to the circus bugs. The picture shows the circus bugs fighting the grasshoppers.

2 a F b T c F d T e F

3 a together b scared c down d does

In these Teacher's Notes

While-Reading activities

Activity 1

1 e 2 b 3 d 4 a 5 c

Activity 2

1 excited 2 fun 3 fight 4 understand 5 find
6 help

Activity 3

1 F 2 T 3 F 4 F 5 T 6 T

Activity 4

The correct order is: b, e, d, a, c

Activity 5

1 b 2 c 3 a

After-Reading activities

Activity 1

ant grasshopper bug bird circus food
excited scared angry fight perform together
mistake fool funny

Activity 2

1 b 2 a 3 e 4 c 5 d

Activity 3

The correct order is: f, k, b, h, d, l, a, g, i, c, j, e