



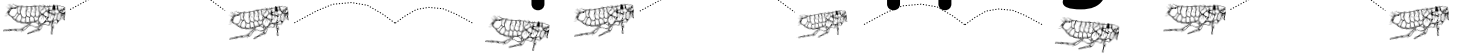
CRITTER CHATS

Volume 5 Number 1

A NEWSLETTER FOR KIDS

Summer 2001

Fleas keep us Hopping mad!



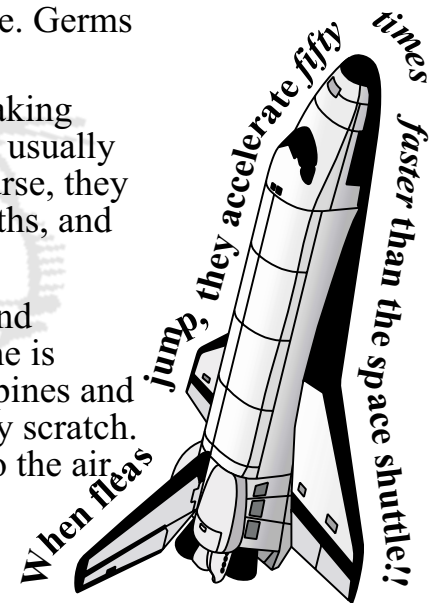
Do you have cats or dogs?

Even if you don't, you are probably familiar with fleas.

Dogs, cats, birds, bats, squirrels, and even people have all been itching and scratching for thousands of years because of fleas. Hungry fleas pierce into skin with their sharp mouthparts and drink from the pool of blood they create. Germs in their saliva can make people and animals sick.

Some dogs go nuts chewing and scratching at fleas, sometimes even making their skin red and raw. They are actually allergic to the flea's saliva and usually need medicine from a veterinarian (animal doctor) to feel better. Of course, they need *your* help too. Help them by giving them lots of refreshing flea baths, and using flea sprays, or powders. They will love you for it!

Fleas are small insects with no wings. Unlike mosquitoes, both males and females bite. There are hundreds of different kinds of fleas, and each one is specially designed to survive. Their flattened bodies are covered with spines and they have hooked feet which help them stay in an animals fur when they scratch. Their hind legs work like springs to launch them amazing distances into the air and they can actually smell the breath of approaching animals!



Have you ever heard of the plague or "black death"?

Look it up on the Internet or in an encyclopedia. Between 1300 and 1800 AD, this disease killed about **137 million people** in Europe and England after they were bitten by infected rat fleas! *Who would have guessed such a little critter could cause such a huge problem.* We still find plague around here in wild ground squirrels and other animals, but the chances of us getting sick are pretty small. It is still a good idea to *never* feed or handle wild animals, or camp near the entrance to their burrows.

Believe it or not!

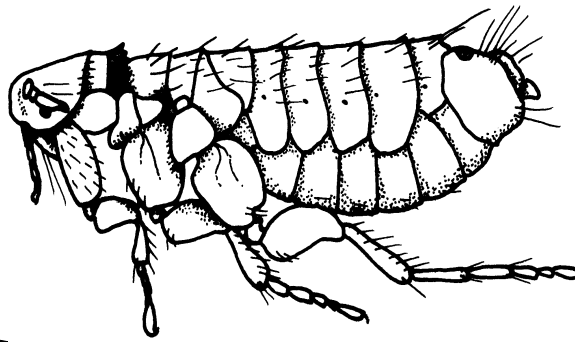
The nursery rhyme *Ring Around the Rosy* was actually written long ago about the plague. The words "ring around the rosy" referred to the bright red sores on the skin of a person infected with plague. A "pocket full of posies" was a bunch of herbs and flowers the people believed would keep them free from the disease. "Ashes, Ashes, we all fall down" means that people were very frightened they were going to die from the plague.

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Activity

Legs



Abdomen

Mouth

Head

Can you label the flea?

Draw lines connecting the words to the correct part of the flea's body.

Bonus:

Insects have *three* major body parts. The flea is no different. Can you identify what body part is missing? Color in the area of the body part that does not have a label.

Critter Math

Complete the following equations. Each answer has a corresponding letter next to it. Fill in the blanks in the bubble with the matching letter to see what the pup has to say about fleas!!!

$8 \times 2 = _ _ _ \text{ A}$

$5 \times 4 = _ _ _ \text{ P}$

$20 + 10 = _ _ _ \text{ O}$

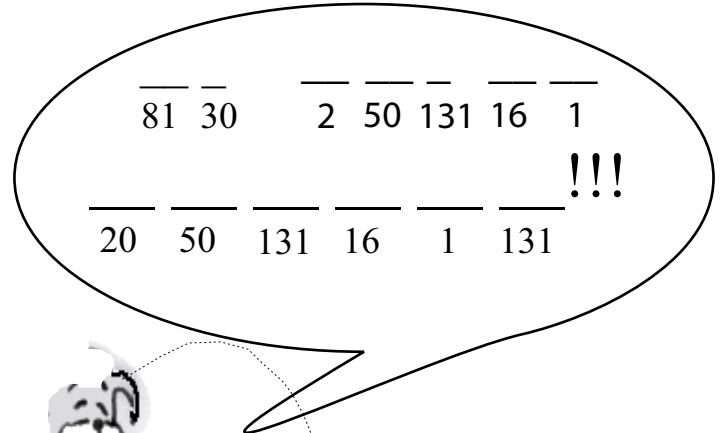
$45 + 5 = _ _ _ \text{ L}$

$118 + 13 = _ _ _ \text{ E}$

$7 - 5 = _ _ _ \text{ F}$

$19 - 18 = _ _ _ \text{ S}$

$9 \times 9 = _ _ _ \text{ N}$



BOOKS

If you want to read more interesting things about fleas, look for these books in your local library or bookstore.

No Fleas, Please! Michael Pellowshi, Troll Assoc. 1986.

Micro Monsters, Life Under the Microscope. Christopher Maynard, DK Publishing, Inc. 1999.



Computer Stuff

Check out these fun WEB SITES for kids!

- [Http://yucky.kids.discovery.com/flash/roaches/index.html](http://yucky.kids.discovery.com/flash/roaches/index.html)
- [Http://www.ivyhall.district96.k12.il.us/4th/kkhp/KodaysKids/1KodaysKids.html](http://www.ivyhall.district96.k12.il.us/4th/kkhp/KodaysKids/1KodaysKids.html)

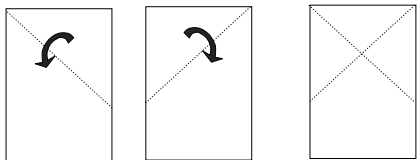
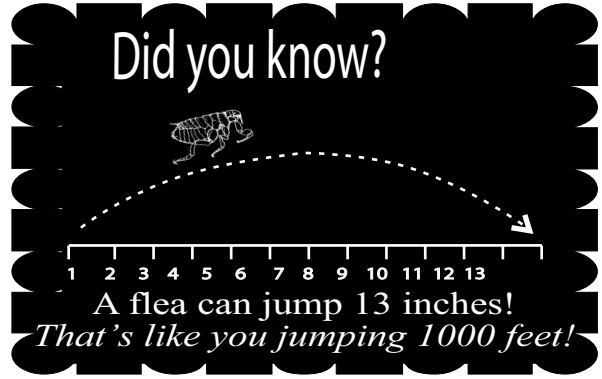
ANSWERS to ACTIVITY and CRITTER MATH:

CRITTER MATH: The poor itchy pup says "No Fleas Please!"

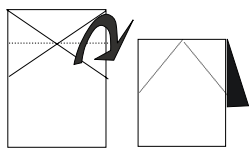
Activity

Make Your Own Jumping Flea!!!

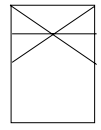
First, cut out the square below and follow the directions carefully!



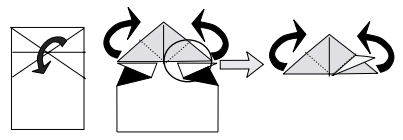
Start by folding one corner down to make a triangle. Open it back up and do the same to the opposite corner. The creases should form an "X".



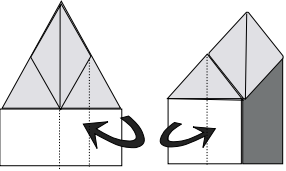
Next fold the "X" in half toward the back.



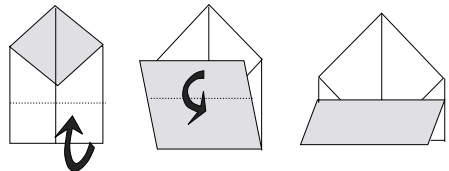
You should end up with creases that look like this.



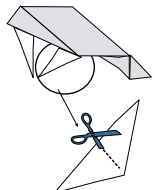
Now, fold the top portion forward and fold in the sides. You should now have a triangle on top! Then, take the outside edges of the triangle and fold them in half toward the top. These are going to be our flea's two front legs.



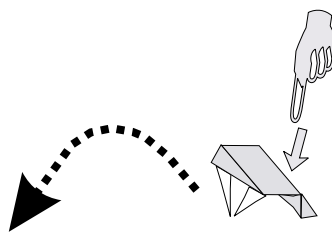
Now fold in both sides all the way to the middle. Here comes the flea's jumping legs!!!



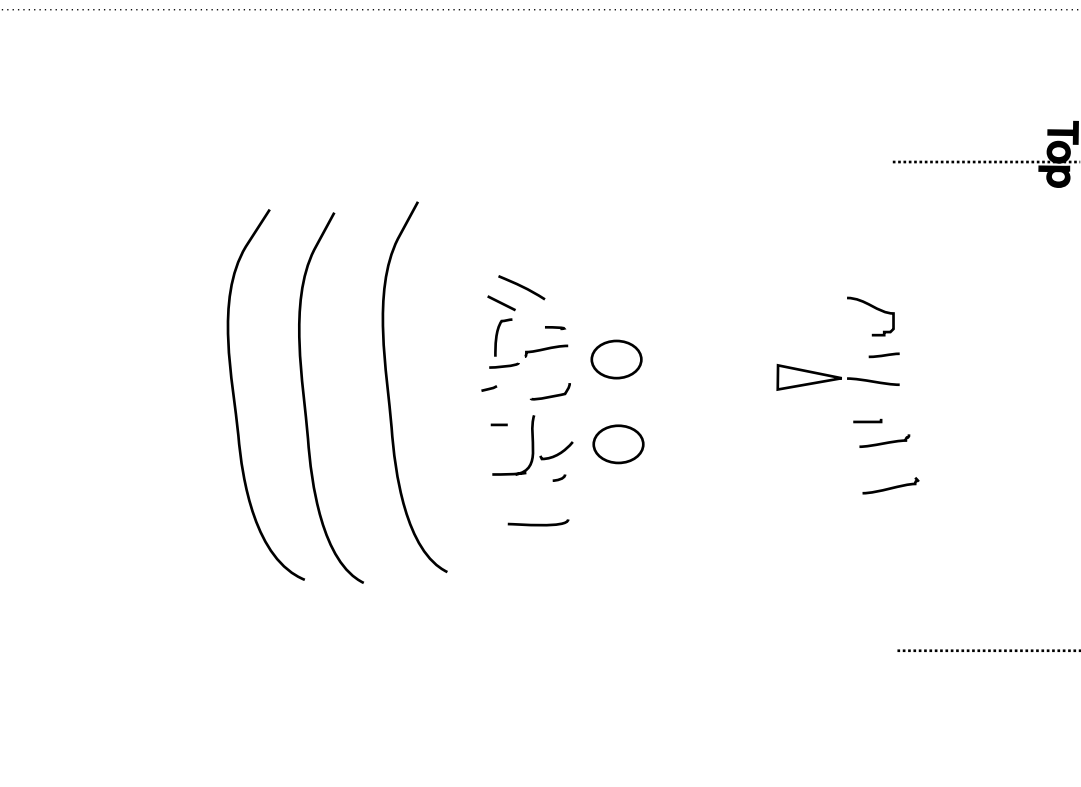
Almost done!!! Fold the bottom rectangle up towards the front legs. This will make a new rectangle. Take that new rectangle and fold it down in half. Now your flea is ready to jump!!



Use scissors to cut the front legs into two parts along the dotted line. Be careful not to cut it all the way off!! Now your flea has SIX legs, just the right number for our high jump king!



Now place the flea on a flat surface and push down on the back of the flea. Away it goes!!!

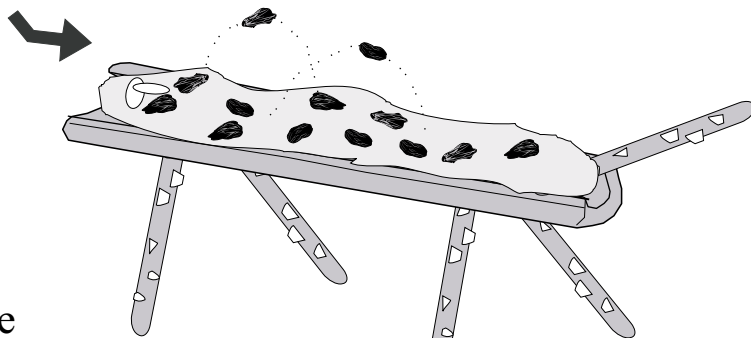


Cut the rectangle out along the dotted lines. This is going to be your jumping flea! Before you start folding, turn the paper OVER so that the eyes, hairs, and body parts are face down and the word "top" is actually at the top!

YOU CAN EAT THE FLEAS ON THIS DOG!

Ingredients:

Celery sticks (The Dog!)
 Peanut Butter
 Raisins (The Fleas)
 5 Pretzel Sticks



First, spread some peanut butter inside the celery stick. Then push four of the pretzel sticks into the celery from the bottom to make legs. Next put a pretzel stick into the peanut butter on one end for the dog's tail. Finally, sprinkle raisins on top of the peanut butter. Now you have fleas on a dog! If you want to, you can be creative and put a face on your dog. How about mini marshmallows for ears and Red Hots for eyes?

Adapted from the "Ants On a Log" recipe

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