

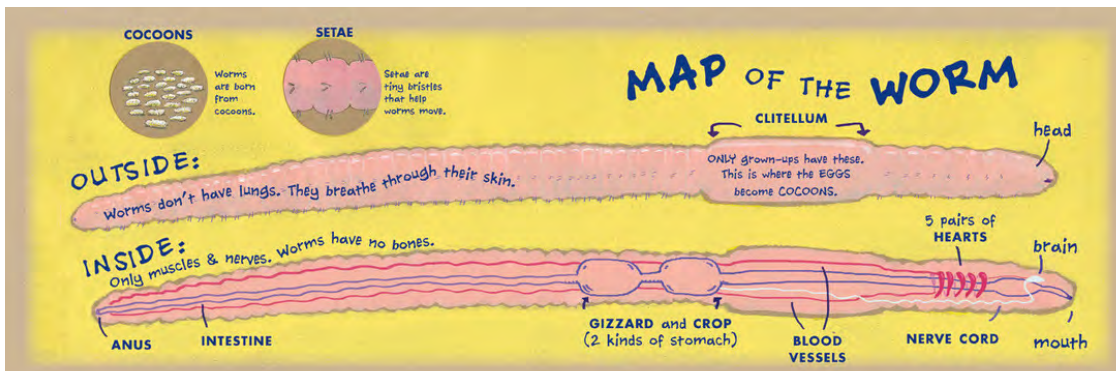
Exceptional Earthworms

Connect - Earthworms are a wiggly and wonderful presence that play an important role in the garden. Understanding earthworm anatomy and the way that they benefit soil health helps us to appreciate the small but mighty members of our natural environment.

Teach - Earthworms burrow within soil and perform many useful functions. Through their process of digging tunnels, earthworms loosen and aerate soil which creates more space for plants to grow and for water to flow to the roots of plants.

Earthworms move organic materials (leaves & plant matter) into the soil which helps to fertilize the soil. As the worms eat and break down plant matter, they leave behind worm castings (worm poop). Castings are an excellent natural fertilizer in the garden.

Read "We Dig Worms" by Kevin McCloskey to your students or access the story via the YouTube link listed in our additional resources section. The story takes students on a journey under the soil and into the world of earthworms. "We Dig Worms" also describes why an earthworm's body is unique through an illustration of the outside and inside anatomy of earthworms.



*Earthworm anatomy illustration courtesy of Kevin McCloskey's book, "We Dig Worms"

Active Engagement -

- Using art supplies, create an advertisement or cartoon inspired by Kevin McCloskey's "We Dig Worms" story that illustrates the great work that worms do under the soil. Ask students to include earthworm facts on their illustration.
- Go on an outdoor earthworm search! Take your students outside and ask them what they've learned about earthworms. How will this information help them to predict where they might locate earthworms? Find a wiggly earthworm? Have students observe earthworms in their natural environment and explain how their bodies move throughout the soil.

Link - Take this lesson as an opportunity to share a "thank you" with the creatures in our gardens and backyards who help our plants, vegetables, flowers, and trees to grow. What other creatures can we thank for providing us with a healthy natural environment?

