



# Micro-organisms: Introduction to Microbes

**Students learn about the different types of microbes – bacteria, viruses and fungi. They learn that microbes have different shapes and that they are found everywhere.**

## Curriculum Links

**Science**

Working scientifically; Living things and their habitats

**PSHE/RSHE**

Health and prevention

**English**

Reading and comprehension

**Art & Design**

Painting, Recording observations

## Key Words

Bacteria, Virus, Fungi, Cell, Germ, Microbe, Probiotic, Microscope

## @ Weblink

[e-bug.eu/eng/KS2/lesson/Introduction-to-Microbes](http://e-bug.eu/eng/KS2/lesson/Introduction-to-Microbes)

## Learning outcomes

All students will:

- Understand that bacteria, viruses and fungi are three main types of microbes.
- Understand that microbes are found everywhere.

Most students will:

- Understand that microbes come in different shapes and sizes and are too small to be seen with our eyes.
- Understand that microbes can be beneficial, harmful or both.

## Resources Required

### Starter Activity: Magazine Microbes

#### *Per student*

- ☐ A selection of magazines/newspapers
- ☐ Crafting materials including:
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Colouring pens
- ☐ A3 or large paper to make a collage

### Main Activity: Designabug

#### *Per group*

- ☐ Copy of SH1
- ☐ Copy of SH2

#### *Per student*

- ☐ Copy of SW1
- ☐ Copy of SH4
- ☐ Colouring pencils
- ☐ Stickers for decoration (optional)
- ☐ Googly eyes for decoration (optional)
- ☐ Print stick/ glue (optional)

### Extension Activity: What Microbe am I?

#### *Per student*

- ☐ Copy of SW2
- ☐ Copy of SH3

### Extension Activity: What are Microbes

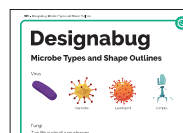
#### *Per student*

- ☐ Copy of SW3
- ☐ Copy of SH3

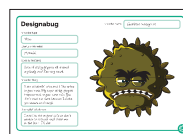
## Advance Preparation

1. Prepare a selection of magazines/newspapers and the materials needed for the starter activity – Magazine Microbes.
2. Download a variety of images of everyday items i.e. shoes, and food from various locations for student viewing.

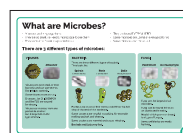
## Supporting Materials



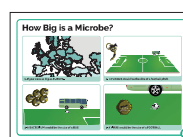
SH1 Designabug  
Microbe shapes



SH2 Designabug  
Examples



SH3 What are Microbes?



SH4 How Big is a Microbe?



SW1 Designabug



SW2 What microbe am I?



SW3 What are Microbes  
Worksheet

# Lesson Plan



## Introduction

1. Begin the lesson by asking students what they already know about micro-organisms. Explain that micro-organisms, sometimes called microbes, germs or bugs, are living things that are too small to be seen with our eyes; they can only be seen through a microscope.
2. Show the students that there are three main types of microbes: bacteria, viruses and fungi. Use the colour handout provided as SH1 to see example microbes.
3. Explain that microbes are so small that they can only be seen through a microscope. Provide students with SH4 How Big is a Microbe to demonstrate the different sizes of microbes.
4. Highlight to the class that microbes can be found EVERYWHERE: floating around in the air we breathe, on the food we eat, on the surface of our bodies, in our mouth, nose and gut/tummy.
5. Explain to the students that some diseases called infections are caused by microbes. Ask the children if they, or anyone in their family, have ever been sick? What was the disease and what do they think caused it?
6. Emphasise that although some microbes cause disease, there are also microbes that can be very useful. Ask students to identify some useful microbes. If they cannot, provide examples for them e.g. *Lactobacillus* in yoghurt and probiotics drinks, Penicillin from fungi, yeast in bread, etc.

## Discussion

At the end of the activity, explain to the participants that microbes are found everywhere even on the magazine they were looking through. Stress that microbes are found all over our skin, mouth, gut and hands. Most are completely harmless that we carry without knowing.

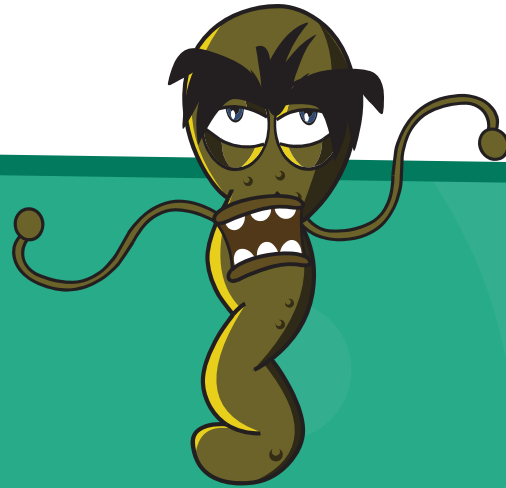
Discuss that the bacteria on our bodies are important as they act as a barrier to stop other more harmful bacteria entering your body and making you ill.

## Main Activity: Designabug

**1 Choose what microbe you want to be (a bacteria, virus or fungi)**

**2 Add more detail to your microbe e.g. shape, useful or harmful microbe**

**3 Name your microbe**



### **Starter Activity: Magazine Microbes (10-20 mins)**

This activity can be carried out either individually or in groups.

1. Provide the students with magazines.
2. Ask students to look through the magazines and find images of places where microbes can be found (i.e. a picture of a fridge, people, kitchen worktop, shoes, clothes etc.)
3. Ask students to cut out the images using scissors and stick onto an A4 piece of paper to make a collage with the title "Where can microbes be found?"
4. If time permits and students are comfortable to they can present their posters to the rest of the group.

**This will help students understand that microbes are found everywhere.**

### **Main Activity: Designabug**

This activity allows students to explore the different types of microbes present in the world by designing their own microbe. An example of the activity can be found in SH2.

Provide each group with SH1 and each student a copy of SH2.

1. Ask students to decide which microbe bacterium, a virus, or a fungus they want to design.
2. And then decide which microbe shape they would like it to be. Use SH1 to help choose a microbe and shape, and SH4 to help students understand the scale of microbes.
3. Ask students to decide whether they want their microbe to be a useful or harmful microbe. This will help students understand that microbes are found everywhere.

4. Ask students to add some details to their microbe depending on whether they've chosen a useful or harmful microbe to design, this could be eyes, a smile, big bushy eyebrows or long wobbly arms.
5. Ask students to give their microbe at least two special features and a strength or weakness.
6. Ask students to provide a backstory about their microbe, this could include where this microbe lives and what they like to do.
7. Finally, ask students to name their microbe, this could be a combination of their own name and the microbe shape.

At the end of the activity provide students with examples of realist microbes so they can compare their own designed microbes with real microbes that exist in the world. You can use SH1 for real microbe examples.

### Fascinating Fact

Antonie van Leeuwenhoek created the first ever microscope in 1676. He used it to examine various items around his home and termed the living creatures (bacteria) he found on scrapings from his teeth 'animalcules'

## Extension Activities

### What Microbe am I?

Provide each participant with a copy of SW2 and SH3. Ask students to read the descriptions and using the information on SH3 students should decide whether the microbes are bacteria, virus or fungi.

#### SW2 Answers:

- a *Staphylococcus* is a bacterium.
- b *Lactobacillus* is a bacterium.
- c Dermatophytes are fungi.
- d SARS-CoV-2 is a virus.
- e *Penicillium* is a fungus.
- f *Campylobacter* is a bacterium

### What are Microbes?

#### Fill in the Blanks Worksheet

Provide each student with a copy of SW3. Ask students to fill in the blanks using the correct words provided. Students can complete this in class or as a homework activity.

## Learning Consolidation

At the end of the lesson, ask the class the questions below to check understanding:

- ☐ What are 3 main types of microbe?  
Answer: Bacteria, viruses and fungi
- ☐ All microbes can be seen by the naked eye, True/False?  
Answer: False
- ☐ On what objects can microbes be found?  
Answer: Microbes are found everywhere
- ☐ Are microbes useful, harmful or both?  
Answer: Both
- ☐ Or write your own.