Slugs and Snails1

Aims: To understand that slugs and snails prefer cool, dark, damp habitats.
To understand the ways in which slugs and snails are adapted to their habitat and lifestyle.
To label a drawing.

KEYSTAGE 1: Science 1: 2b, 2f | Science 2: 1b, 1c, 2a, 2e, 2g, 5a, 5b

Slugs and snails eat plants. Their tongues are covered with hundreds of teeth with which they cut and scrape their food. They also have four antennae on their heads - the top two are eyes, which can only see light and dark, and the bottom two are for smell and taste. All of these antennae can be pulled back into the head when the slug or snail is disturbed.

Slugs and snails have a giant foot which they move with - try putting a slug or snail on a piece of glass and look from underneath to see how the foot moves. Slugs and snails produce their own slimy mucus on which they glide - this makes walking easier and acts as glue to hold on to walls, etc. You can often see the dried shiny trails where they have been.

Snails grow their own shells and, as they grow they add new material (calcium) to the shell so it grows with them. Slugs and snails both prefer damp weather as they can dry out in hot sun. If the weather is too hot the snails retreat into their shells and seal the opening with mucus.

Birds like to eat slugs and snails but they have to wipe them on the ground first to get rid of the slimy mucus. Thrushes smash snail shells by dropping them onto rocks (anvils).

Slugs and Snails1

Go into your school grounds and look for slugs and snails. When you have found one, draw its picture in the box below.

Draw your slug or snail in detail

Label: *eyes, antennae, giant foot, shell*

Circle the words below which describe best the places where you found slugs and snails.

Moist	Damp	Sunny	Sheltered
Shade	Hot	Freezing	Bumpy
Cold	Warm	Wet	Watery
Dark	Cool	Smooth	Dry

Describe exactly where you found your slug or snail.

Slugs and Snails 2

Aims: Identify behavioural difference of animals in different conditions.

KEYSTAGE 1: Science 1: 2a, 2b, 2h, 2i | Science 2: 1b, 1c, 2b

Put a snail (or slug) in a jar with some food and leave it for an hour in a dark cupboard. Take the jar out and you should see the snail feeding. Is there any difference in what the snail is doing in the dark cupboard compared to the one you found in the daylight in the school grounds? If there are any differences describe these. Why is the snail behaving differently?

Because slugs and snails are so prone to drying out in warm weather or sunlight they have adapted to being most active at night (nocturnal) when it is cooler, darker and generally damper. At night there are also fewer predators (such as birds) about. If you have a problem with slugs or snails in your garden then just go out at night with a torch and you should be able to see plenty of them.

By putting a slug or snail in a cupboard with some food you should fool them into thinking that it is night time. They should then become far more active than the ones you found sheltering in crevices and under stones in the school grounds. You may be able to watch them feeding, see their antennae and maybe even watch how their foot moves through the glass.

Slugs and Snails 2

Put a snail (or slug) in a jar with some food and leave it for an hour in a dark cupboard. Take the snail out and you should be able to see it feeding.

Draw the lettuce leaf before and after it has been eaten

Before	**After**

How much of the leaf has the snail eaten?

None **Less than half** **Half** **More than half** **All of it**

Is there any difference in the way the snail is behaving in the dark cupboard compared to the one you found in the daylight in the school grounds?

Yes **No**

If there are any differences describe them.

Why do you think the snail is behaving differently?