

The Arthropod Opera

Act I:

1 - Monarch Butterfly:

I am a butterfly, my name is Monarch
Say Monarch, Monarch
I fly with orange and black colorful wings
They send a message, what do they mean?

Poisonous! We do not taste very good
For as young caterpillars we ate special food
Milkweed! To grow for metamorphosis
Before we emerge from our chrysalis
As adult Monarch butterflies, but not just!

Thousands of miles, we migrate, us Monarchs
A mystery how we know where to go
We all share the world with this beautiful order of
Butterflies and Moths, Lepidoptera!

2 - Ladybird Beetle:

I am a Lady bird beetle
You may know me as Ladybug
I'm a beetle, quite familiar
Red or orange with black polka dots

Shiny covers cover wings
Elytra, showing off our colors
Eating aphids as predators
While helping plants, life, farms, and gardeners

Beetles shape the world over
Number more than any order
Of insect, we're the most diverse
The beetles, Coleoptera!

3 - Little Black Ant:

We are the ants, and we march,
march, march
A colony of ants, and we march,
march, march
Searching for some food, we march in a line
A social insect group, of Hymenoptera
Found around the world, and we march, march, march
On nearly every bit of land, we march, march, march

We have a queen, and we have some workers too
Even winged adults who fly, to start colonies new
We clean the ground and decompose, to help the world to live and grow
We even plant a lot of seeds, as we march from sea to sea

Diverse and highly specialized
Our colonies often comprise
Of thousands upon thousands of
Marching Hymenoptera!

4 - House Fly:

I am a fly, and yes I fly!
We're special, and I'll tell you why
An insect, related to all the rest
With wings and halteres to fly the best!

But when we're seen on something rotten
Our brilliance is fast forgotten
Flies support a healthy world
In fact, we're quite exceptional

We decompose what's left of animals
And are eaten, so it goes!
We metamorphose, first eggs are laid

Once hatched, they're adults in about 10 days!

We pollinate, and help get food on your plate

Like chocolate? Thank the midge fly, both are great!

We specialize, there's many different flies

Diverse and global, worldwide

A truly exceptional Arthropod
Hurrah for humble Diptera!

5 - Orb Web Spider:

I am a spider, and I spin a silken web to
Capture flying Insects, and then eat them, yum yum!
An Orb web spider, with a spiral, shimmering web
I eat it everyday, and then rebuild my home

Spiders, Scorpions, Ticks, Mites
Arachnids, similar, alike
Essential for a healthy world
Arachnids, special Arthropods

Spiders are a predator, with fangs to help deliver
Venom to our prey, a special protein mixture
Just a small amount to help us eat our dinner
And often times we find ourselves
A tasty meal for something else!

Arachnids, Insects, Arthropods
We share this world together
Predator and prey
Eat and eaten, Araneae!

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Act II:

6 - Honey Bee:

I am a Honey Bee
Many bees look much like me
Yellow and black patterns showing
Off our colorful bright warning

We build hives in cavities
Often times we're found in trees
A social group, like Ants and Wasps
And Termites, all these Arthropods

Honey bees live in large groups
But most bees have a smaller troop
Bumble bees and many others
Are native bees, here long before us

Our queen sends messages through
smells
Workers forage, out by themselves
Then share the knowledge with familial
bees
Through waggle dances, in hives with
ease

A fast dance, near, a long dance, far
Direction based on the sun, our star
A strong dance, great, a weak dance,
fine
Dancing to communicate, sublime!

7 - Pollination:

We are the pollinators
We help plants to reproduce
Life evolved together slowly
Native plants and animals show

Connections, we visit flowers and feed
Pollinating naturally
The plants and animals need each
other
Food for one, new life the other

Who pollinates all around the Earth?
About one in three fruits and
vegetables
Butterflies, bees, mosquitoes, midges,
and more
Arthropods pollinate around the world!

8 - Predator and Prey:

We are predator and prey
Depending on the day
Everything in balance and connected
As our global food webs say

Some days we catch food and feast
Other days, we're a meal to be
Insects, arachnids, these Arthropods
Important food for life, near and far

Some are masters spinning webs
Or hunting with venom and
appendages
Predators help our nature thrive
By eating, shaping groups of life
Spiders, ants, and beetles seeking
Flies are often found retreating
Necessary all around the globe
The food web of life, and Arthropods

9 - Decomposers:

We are the decomposers
Many of us may look familiar
Ants, beetles, flies all looking
For something juicy, something rotten

We are fed, and in turn clean
Our home, nature, of many things
Without us it'd be quite a mess
Of passed on life and carcasses

An important job, unseen by most
But critical for new plant growth
Nutrients returned to soil
Fertilized, a nice plant meal

From something dead comes life anew
Around the Earth, it's what we do
Decomposers helping everyday
And Arthropods help lead the way!

10 - Diversity and Ecosystem Strength:

We are all important, everyone of you
We each will shape the world in a
special way, it's true
All of life evolves together, everything
on Earth connected
Arthropods and people, all essential,
life must be respected

Insects, Arachnids, Myriapods,
Crustaceans, this group called
Arthropods
Are each unique, but also share, a list
of things all similar
An exoskeleton, jointed legs, we moult
to grow and shed our skin
Compound eyes, with many facets,
over five hundred million years we've
been at it

Diversity brings strength to all, it's not
just for us Arthropods
New ideas make the world strong,
helps society grow, helps us all belong
Diversity brings strength to all, you're a
part of this world, and opera!
Predators and prey, pollinators,
decomposers, the Arthropod
ambassadors!
Arthropods!
Arthropods!
Arthropods!