**ACTIVITY: Wormface – social networking for earthworms**

**Activity idea**

In this activity, students research an earthworm of their choice before completing a Wormface profile for their earthworm. This activity is designed to replicate the creation of an online social networking profile (like Facebook) and requires computer access.

By the end of this activity, students should be able to:

* understand that not all earthworms are the same and that different species show differences in pigmentation, size, preferred habitat and so on
* explain some features of their chosen earthworm including favourite foods, habitat and whether they are native or introduced
* describe the role their earthworm plays in the ecosystem
* better explain some common scientific terms including ‘scientific name’, ‘native’, ‘introduced’, ‘habitat’ and ‘ecosystem’.

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**Introduction/background**

In New Zealand, we have over 200 known species of earthworm. Most of our earthworms are natives and found nowhere else on Earth. However, the earthworms we are most likely to encounter on rainy footpaths or in garden or pasture soils are introduced species.

To most of us, one earthworm resembles another. Although earthworms do have common characteristics, species differ widely in their size, skin colour and in the roles they play in the soil ecosystem. This activity asks students to research one species of earthworm in detail and then use the information they find to create a Wormface profile.

Note: At the time of writing (March 2012), the age restriction for Facebook was 13 years (although it is possible to create an account at any age). If issues around this arise in your classroom, you might like to explore the resources for teachers in the Facebook Family Safety Centre – see [www.facebook.com/safety](http://www.facebook.com/safety). Facebook legal terms are available here: [www.facebook.com/legal/terms?ref=pf](http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms?ref=pf).

**What you need**

* Access to the [Wormface](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/embeds/55-wormface) interactive on a computer
* Access to the Science Ideas and Concepts articles [Niches within earthworms’ habitats](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/7-niches-within-earthworms-habitat) and [Earthworms’ role in the ecosystem](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/9-earthworms-role-in-the-ecosystem)
* Access to the Looking Closer articles [Native and introduced earthworms](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/20-native-and-introduced-earthworms) and [*Octochaetus multiporus*](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/21-octochaetus-multiporus)and the PowerPoint [Common New Zealand earthworms](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/23-common-new-zealand-earthworms)
* Access to the interactives [Inside of an earthworm](https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/image_maps/24-inside-of-an-earthworm) and [outside of an earthworm](https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/image_maps/27-outside-of-an-earthworm).
* Access to the video clip [Not all the same](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/admin/videos/4-not-all-the-same)

**What to do**

1. As a class, watch the short video clip [Not all the same](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/admin/videos/4-not-all-the-same) and discuss some of the features of the earthworms in the video.
2. In pairs, small groups or as a class, discuss the kinds of questions you might answer if you were completing a profile on a social networking site like Facebook. Would any of these questions be the same for earthworms? What other questions might be important for earthworms?
3. Explain to the students that they will be allowed to choose a species of earthworm and complete a Wormface profile for their chosen earthworm. It may be helpful to have a look at the interactive [Wormface](http://link.sciencelearn.org.nz/embeds/55-wormface) profile template as a class and remind students to roll their mouse over each term for more information. If appropriate, students could work in pairs.
4. Allow students sufficient time to research their earthworm (using the resources listed above as a starting point). When they have completed their profile, they can press submit. This will give them the option to save their profile as an image (.jpeg) file. They will not be able to make changes once their profile has been submitted.
5. Invite students to share something they found interesting about their earthworm. If possible, print the profiles for display in the classroom.