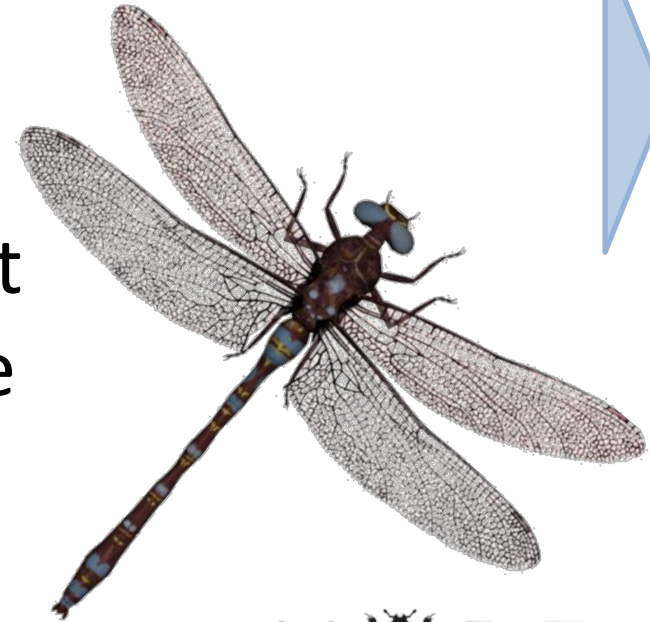




Insects are a varied group. Over half of the types living things are insects. Each type is called a **species** (say “spee-shees”).

Scientists have described **over a million** different species of insect and more are being found all the time. **About 20,000** different species are found in the UK.



Classifying Insects

Scientists sort insects into groups called **Orders**.
The Orders with the greatest number of species,
the 'Big 5', are:

True flies
(Diptera)



Bees, wasps
and ants
(Hymenoptera)



Beetles
(Coleoptera)



Butterflies
and moths
(Lepidoptera)



True bugs
(Hemiptera)



Beetles

Beetles are in the Order **Coleoptera** Which means 'covered wings' (say "col-ee-op-ter-a").



Their outer wings form a **hard case**, which protects the delicate inner wings .

Bees, wasps and ants

These insects are all related. They are in the Order **Hymenoptera** meaning ‘membrane wings’ (say “Hi-men-op-ter-a”).



They have **two** pairs of thin, transparent wings and a **narrow** ‘waist’ between their thorax and abdomen.

True flies

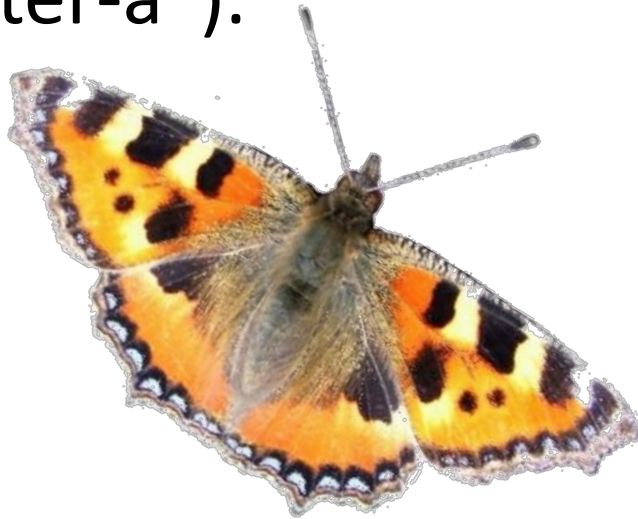
These insects are in the Order **Diptera** meaning 'two wings' (say "dip-ter-a").



They have **one pair** of thin, transparent wings.

Butterflies and moths

These closely-related insects are in the Order **Lepidoptera** meaning ‘scaly wings’ (say “lep-id-op-ter-a”).



Their wings are covered in **tiny scales**.

True bugs

True bugs, like shield bugs and aphids, are both in the Order **Hemiptera** meaning ‘half wings’ (say “hem-ip-ter-a”).



They have mouthparts adapted for **piercing** and **sucking**.

Some other types of insect

Here are some other insect Orders you may see:



Grasshoppers and crickets (Orthoptera, “or-thop-ter-a”) Insects with long wings and long legs for jumping.



Dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata, “oh-don-ah-ta”) Long-bodied insects whose larvae live in water

Things to do next



Watch the [Bug 5! Video](#) by Dr Lindsay Turnbull to explain the different Orders further.



Have a go at our [insect types quiz](#).



Can you spot an insect from each of the 'big 5' Orders? Have a look in your garden or local green space.



Have a go at our 'Investigating Insect Pollination' Activity.

Acknowledgements

We hope you enjoyed learning about different insects. This is one of a series of resources from the HOPE collection of British insects at the University of Oxford Museum of Natural History.

You can find more about the HOPE for the Future Project on our website: oumnh.ox.ac.uk/hope-future

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