

# Anthill

Written by Jitka Petřeková  
Illustrated by Tomáš Tůma

B4U PUBLISHING



Model of an  
**ANTHILL**  
inside



# Ants in an anthill

Up to 400 000 worker ants live in a colony with one queen. They take care of the operation of the anthill as a whole. In spring, males are hatched so that they can take part in the nuptial flight. There can be several million ants in one anthill.



## Male

Between 3,5 mm and 5 mm long.  
Hatches with wings only once a year.  
It stays in the anthill only briefly and doesn't live to a great age.



## Queen

Only one queen lives in each anthill. The largest of all, it is between 7 mm and 10 mm long. It hatches as a fertile, winged female only once a year. Its whole life long it lays eggs from which wingless (worker) and winged (male and female) ants hatch. It lives for 15—20 years.

## Female

Between 7 mm and 10 mm long.  
Hatches with wings only once a year.  
After the nuptial flight its wings break off and it becomes a queen.





### **Worker**

Between 3 mm and 4 mm long. Hatches without wings throughout the year. Worker ants fulfil special functions such as guard, builder, gatherer and provider, helper and nurse. They live for 6—8 years.



Builder



Nurse



Helper



Gatherer and provider

Look out!



Guard

Although every ant in an anthill has its role, in case of emergency ants can work together very well. When threatened by water, for instance, certain ant species are able to use their own bodies to build a raft.



# Anatomy

## OF THE WOOD ANT



### Antennae

Antennae are olfactory and tactile organs. They are also used for signalling.

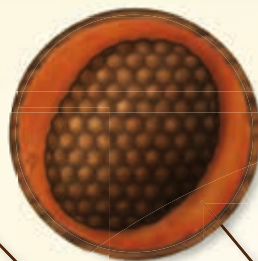


### Mandibles

Mandibles serve for the gathering and intake of food. Ants also use their mandibles to carry and feed larvae and pupae in the hatchery, and for protection.

### Eyes

The eyes are located on the top of the head. The extent and angle of visibility is 360 degrees.

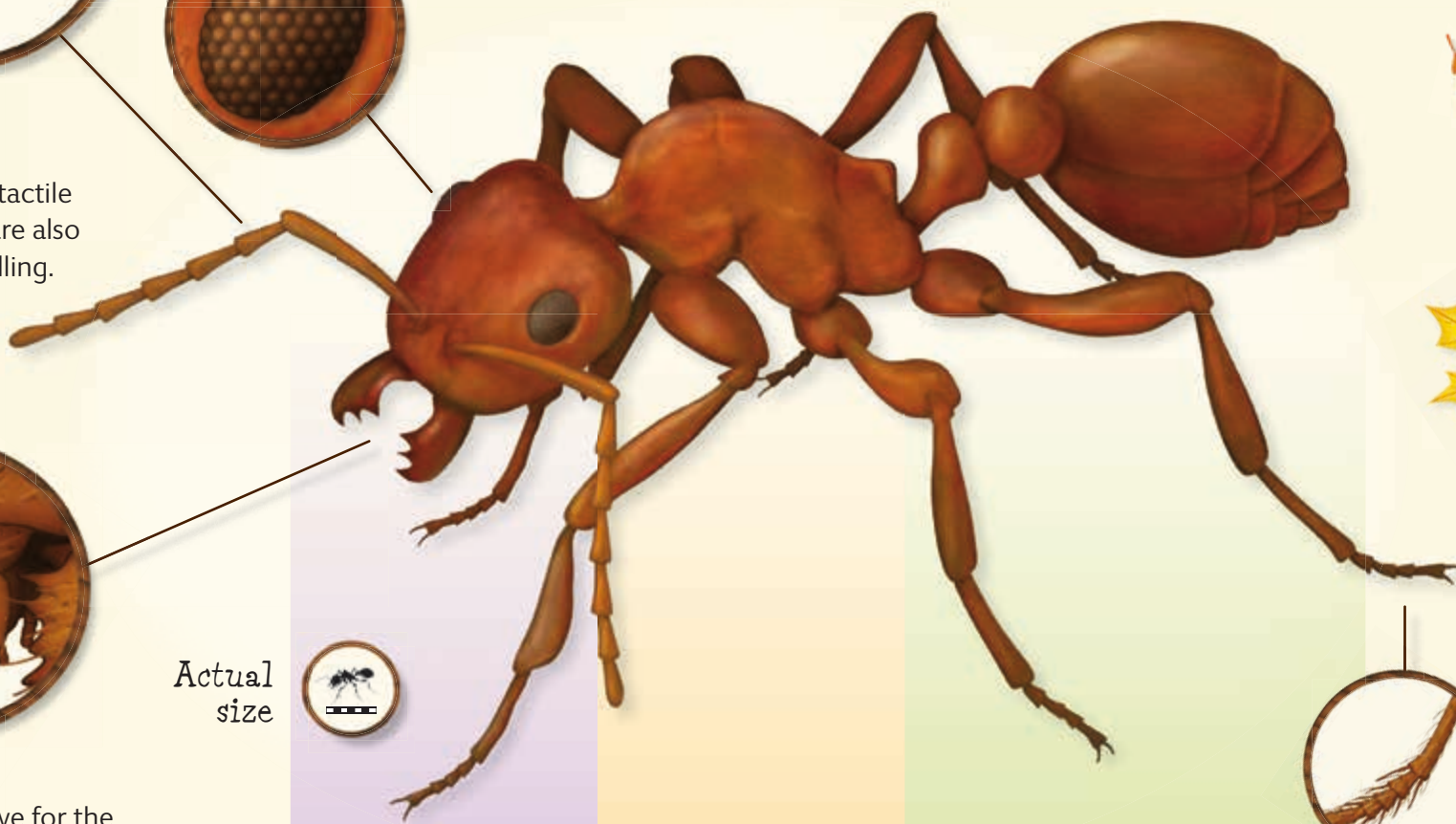


### Wings

Wings are divided into front and hind. The hind wings are smaller than the front wings.

### Abdomen

On the abdomen ants have a stunted stinger with a sac containing ant venom. When under threat, they can squirt this venom up to 20 centimetres in distance.



Actual size



HEAD

THORAX

ABDOMEN

### Body

An ant is between 3 mm and 10 mm long. Its body is made up of a number of parts (head, thorax, abdomen).

### Legs

An ant has three pairs of legs, which are designed for fast running. These legs have a claw on the end.



# Ant species

Ants are the most numerous insects on Earth: their total number is estimated at **1 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000** (one quadrillion). We distinguish about 12 000 ant species.



## Pharaoh ant

2 - 4 mm

Comes from tropical areas of temperate regions and is most common in Africa and Indonesia. For reasons of warmth it settles in households, where it is a tiresome pest, infects food and is a carrier of disease.



## Wood ant

6 - 11 mm

The most widespread species with one queen in the colony. It inhabits much of central and northern Europe and is also found in North America. The wood ant is a species protected by law.

TERMITES  
ARE  
NOT ANTS!



Although a termite's way of life is similar to that of an ant, termites are not ants.

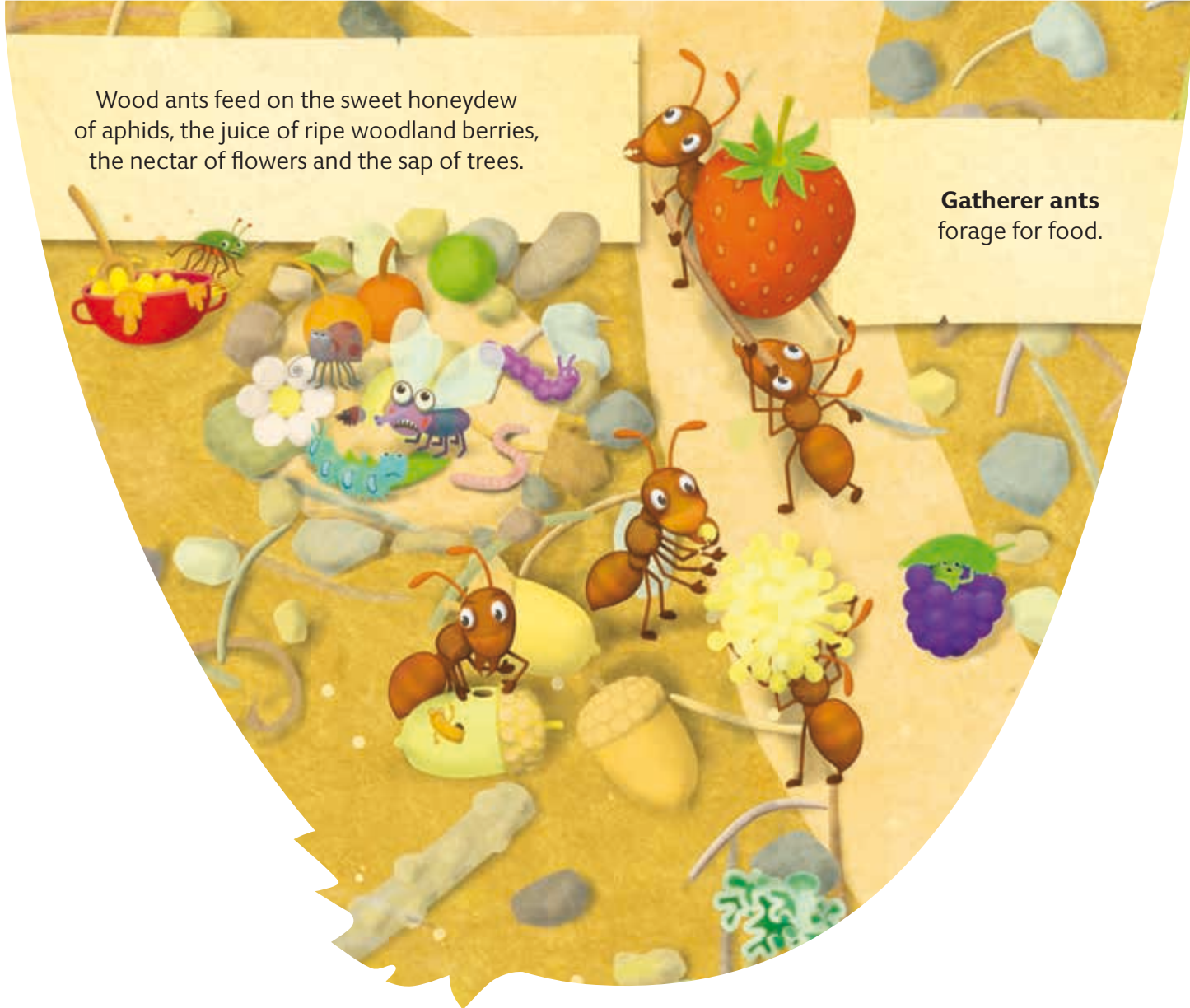




An anthill is literally woven into a **labyrinth of corridors** and **chambers** that must be repaired constantly by daubing, buttressing and filling holes.

Wood ants feed on the sweet honeydew of aphids, the juice of ripe woodland berries, the nectar of flowers and the sap of trees.

**Gatherer ants**  
forage for food.





A whimsical illustration of an ant colony in a nest made of straw. Several ants are shown: some are tending to larvae in wooden cribs, one is carrying a larva, and another is pushing a small cart with a larva. There are also pupae and a sign that says 'Ant Hatchery'. The scene is set in a nest with straw, small flowers, and a small stream at the bottom.

**Pupae**

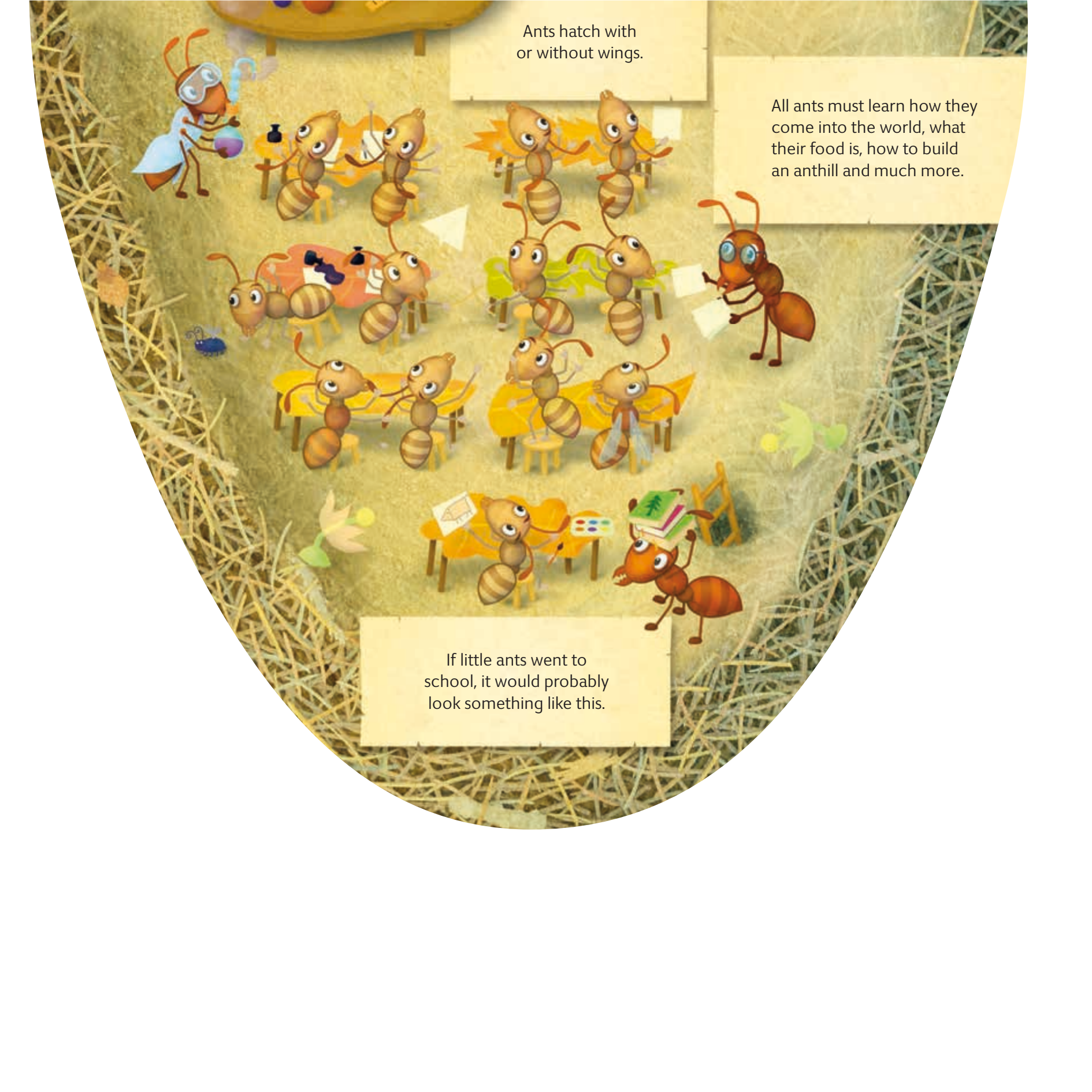
**Pupae** spawn new ants very quickly.

**Ant Hatchery**

**Nurse ants** carry larvae from place to place and feed them using their mandibles.

**Larvae**





Ants hatch with  
or without wings.

All ants must learn how they  
come into the world, what  
their food is, how to build  
an anthill and much more.

If little ants went to  
school, it would probably  
look something like this.