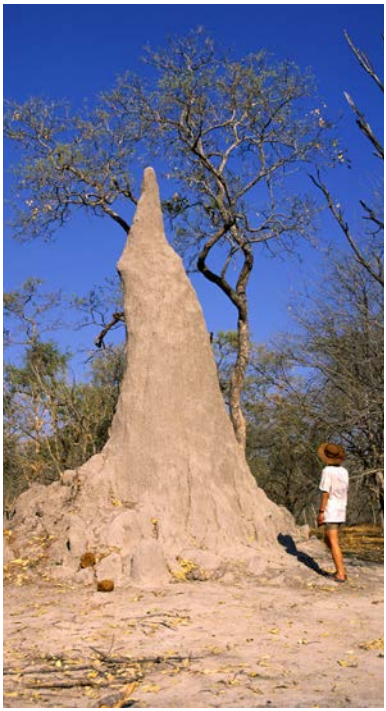

LEVELED BOOK • K
What Built This?
MULTI LEVEL H•K•N
Written by Marcie Aboff
www.readinga-z.com

What Built This?



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Focus Question

What are some reasons animals build?

Table of Contents

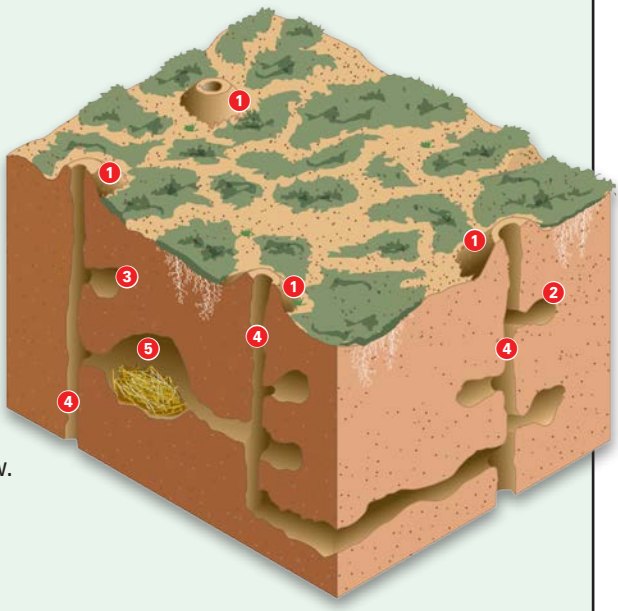
Animal Builders

Not all **builders** are human. Some builders are animals! They build homes for themselves and their young. They build for **protection** and to catch **prey**. Take a look at what animals build.

Male bowerbirds first build the bower for females, then decorate it!

Welcome to Tunnel Town

1. A family group has its own burrow with several entrances.
2. Near the entrances are rooms where prairie dogs can listen for predators.
3. Turnaround burrows are also near the surface.
4. Air vents keep fresh air moving throughout the burrow.
5. The bedroom is usually deeper underground.



Prairie Dog Towns

A maze of prairie dog tunnels is like a real town. The underground tunnels have different rooms for sleeping and eating. Family groups stay together in "neighborhoods." They come and go through many **entrances**.

Prairie dogs are only found in North America.

Sociable weavers live in southern Africa. Their nests help protect them from hot and cold outside temperatures.

Sociable Weaver Bird Nests

These friendly birds like a large crowd. Their nests can hold up to four hundred birds. They use large sticks and dry grass for the nest's roof and sides. The inside is lined with softer grasses.

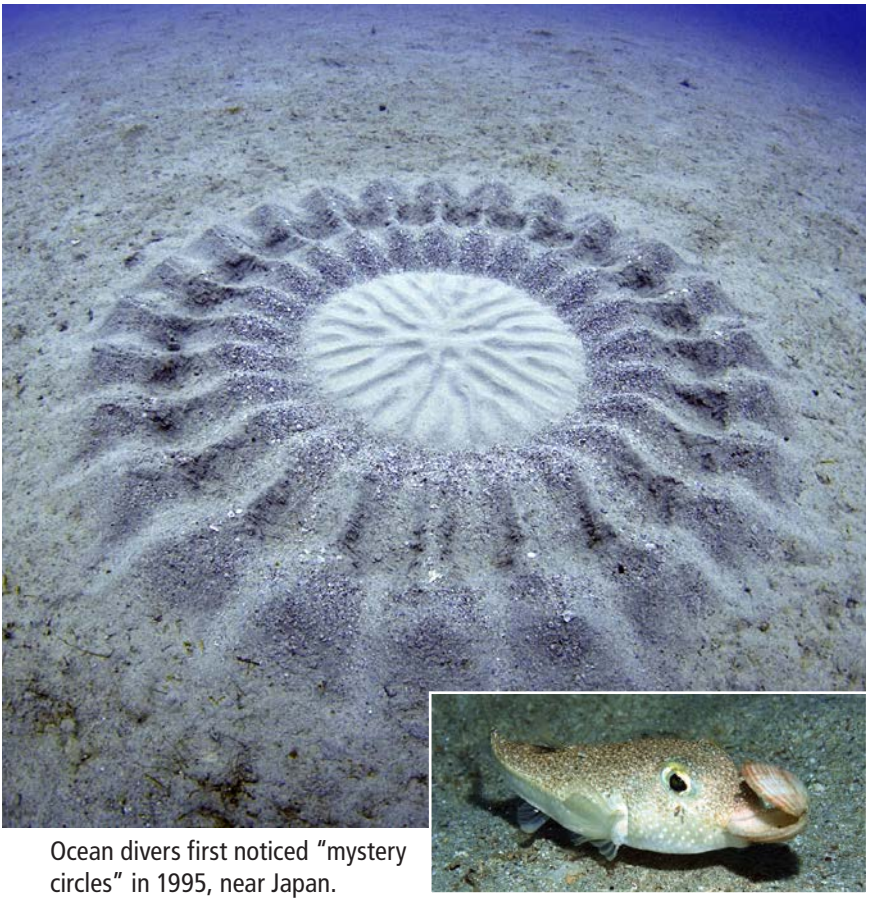
Termite Mounds

Tiny termites can build mounds that are taller than three people standing on top of each other! They build their mounds with mud and chewed wood. The walls have tiny holes for fresh air.

A termite mound stands tall in western Africa.

One Queen, 165 Million Eggs!

The king and queen termite live in a special room. The queen can produce thousands of eggs per day and can live up to age forty-five. Worker termites carry her young to a nursery room where they are fed until they are adults.



Ocean divers first noticed "mystery circles" in 1995, near Japan.

Pufferfish Circles

These male fish make sand art to attract females. They form a large round pattern on the seafloor and decorate the circle with shells. If a female likes the circle, she lays her eggs in the middle.

A trapdoor spider sneaks from its hiding place to grab a passing beetle.

Spider Trapdoors

These sly spiders dig an underground tunnel and make a trapdoor on top. They cover the trapdoor with their **silk**, and then cover that with dirt. When prey passes above them, they open the door and the prey falls through.

Underground Ant City

Millions of ants work together to build underground ant cities. These giant cities have dirt "highways" that connect rooms. Side roads lead to gardens and trash pits.

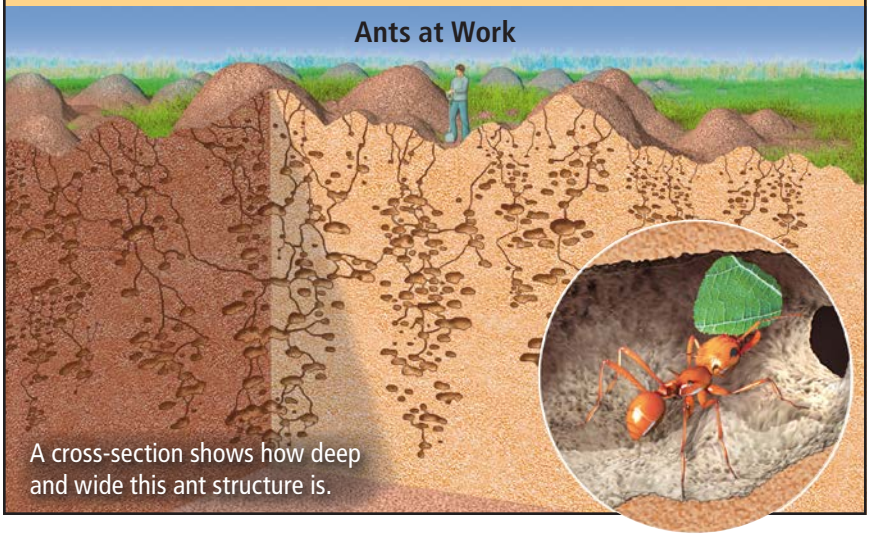
After humans, leafcutter ants (inset) form the largest communities on Earth.

Researchers stand above and beside a leafcutter city in Brazil.

Little Ants, Big City

Researchers found a huge, empty underground city in Brazil, once the home of leafcutter ants. In order to build their home, each insect would have carried loads of earth more than half a mile (0.8 km)—over and over. In total, the ants moved around 45 tons (40 mt) of soil to create their network of tunnels.

Ants at Work



A cross-section shows how deep and wide this ant structure is.

Paper wasp nests come in a variety of shapes and styles.

Paper Wasp Nests

Paper wasps chew bits of wood and plants to make a soft nest. The nest is made up of **cells** that look like an egg carton. Wasp eggs grow in the cells. As the wasps grow in number, the nest gets bigger.

Crayfish Chimneys

Crayfish dig into moist soil to reach water. The dirt they push up looks like a small chimney. Other animals, such as snakes, sometimes hide in the empty chimney.

Crayfish (also known as crawfish) breathe with gills. Gills must remain wet, which is why crayfish burrow down in search of water.

Beaver Dams and Dens

Busy beavers use sticks and mud to build their dams. The dams make ponds. Beavers build their homes, called *dens,* in the ponds. The ponds protect the beavers from other animals.

The Best of Both Worlds

Beavers enter their dens by swimming into them (top). The living portion, though, is built above the water level. This keeps the beaver family high and dry! A beaver carries mud to build its dam (bottom).

Caddisfly Cocoons

These little insects use their silk to make cocoons. They add sand, small sticks, even shells to their cocoons to make beautiful artlike cases.

Watch Them Build

Animals build great things. They do not need tools to build. They just use their bodies and the Earth around them. Animals are amazing!

A black-tailed prairie dog looks out of its burrow.

Glossary

builders *(n.)* those who make or construct something from parts (p. 4)

cells *(n.)* six-sided cups that form honeycomb, hives, or insect nests (p. 12)

entrances *(n.)* openings or entryways to a place (p. 5)

prey *(n.)* an animal that is hunted and eaten (p. 4)

protection *(n.)* defense from harm or danger (p. 4)

silk *(n.)* strong threads made by a spider or silkworm (p. 9)

Words to Know

builders	prey
cells	protection
entrances	silk

Front cover: A bird called the brown gardener builds a bower, then decorates it!

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Correlation

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Reading Recovery	17
DRA	18

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A Reading A–Z Level K Leveled Book
Word Count: 339

Connections

Writing and Art

Choose one of the animals from this book. Draw a picture of the animal and what it builds. Label your picture using facts and information from this book.

Science

Choose two of the animals from this book. Draw a Venn diagram comparing what these two animals build, listing at least five similarities and differences.