

Earthworm Dissection Write-Up

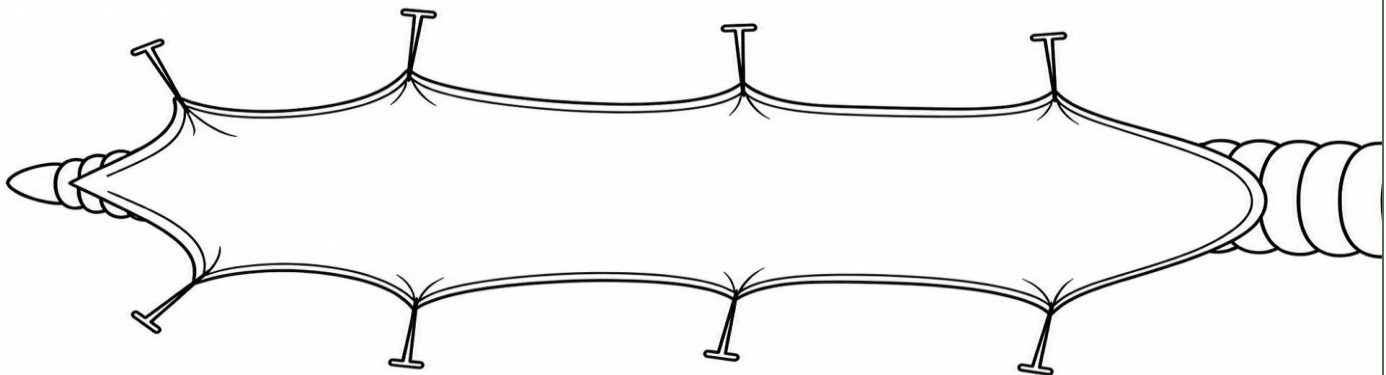
Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

External Drawing — Earthworm—Lateral View

Label: Mouth, Anus, Metameres, Clitellum, Setae, Dorsal, Ventral, Anterior, Posterior

Internal Drawing — Earthworm—Dorsal View

Label: Brain (cerebral ganglia), Pharynx, Esophagus, Septa, Aortic arches (hearts), Seminal vesicles, Crop, Gizzard, Anterior intestine ("stomach"), Intestine, Dorsal blood vessel, Ventral nerve cord, Nephridia, Coelom



Materials Needed: Gloves, eye protection, dissecting tray, scissors, probe, 10–15 pins, an earthworm specimen, and colored pencils.
Optional: hand lens. Use any other teacher-required protective equipment.

Procedure Summary

1. Use the dissection guide, website's diagrams and photos to help locate the external structures listed above.
2. Place the specimen dorsal side up. Gently straighten and untwist it without overstretching. Pin both ends with the dorsal side still facing up.
3. Use fine-point scissors to make a shallow snip in the delicate body wall about 1 inch posterior to the clitellum. Avoid internal organs.
4. Extend the cut anteriorly toward the mouth, just to one side of the dorsal midline to protect the dorsal blood vessel.
5. Gently release septal attachments with the probe. Pin the flaps open at a low angle, with points secured in the tray. Rotate the tray to reach the other side.
6. Identify and draw the internal structures first. With teacher direction, gently move or remove a short posterior section of intestine to expose and draw the ventral nerve cord.
7. Use colored pencils. Add clear leader lines and all required labels. Record colors and structures before cleanup; preserved colors may differ. Mark structures you cannot locate "not observed."

Clean Up

8. Place the specimen and tissue in the bag or container provided, following your teacher's disposal instructions.
9. Return all pins. Clean and dry the scissors, probe, and tray as directed.
10. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Think About It

11. How does the earthworm's segmented body help it move through soil?

12. Why is it useful to study both a real specimen and a reference diagram?