

**ENGLISH**

**KEY STAGE 2 2005**

**SPELLING**

**LEVELS**

**3–5**

**Spelling Test**

***Bacteria***

**Teacher's Version**

## Bacteria

The importance of washing their hands  
before a meal is emphasised to small children  
as a way of keeping healthy. But do you ever  
think about germs and disease? It is true that  
some bacteria, and other micro-organisms, can cause  
serious problems, but most bacteria are not  
especially harmful. In fact, without bacteria, there would be  
no life on Earth as we know it.

Bacteria that live in soil break down, or decompose, the  
remains of dead plants and animal material.  
In the process, the bacteria make  
essential substances  
available to be used by living plants as they  
grow. These pass to the animals that eat the plants. Of  
course the bacteria do not do this to be helpful; it is just the  
way they obtain the energy they need to  
survive.

Some bacteria live in the digestive systems of humans and animals. This benefits the bacteria as they have a regular **supply** of food, and benefits humans and animals as the bacteria **release** nutrients from the food that would otherwise pass through them.

Humans have found many **surprising** ways to turn some extraordinary bacteria and other micro-organisms to our **advantage**. We use the **properties** of bacteria to produce milk and to make cheese, butter and yoghurt. Bacteria can also be used in **medicine** to stop the effects of other bacteria that cause **physical** illness.

No one knows how many **varieties** of bacteria there might be, or what they could all be used for. But one thing to **remember** is that if we, or any other organism, can benefit from this it may be more by chance than **design**.

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