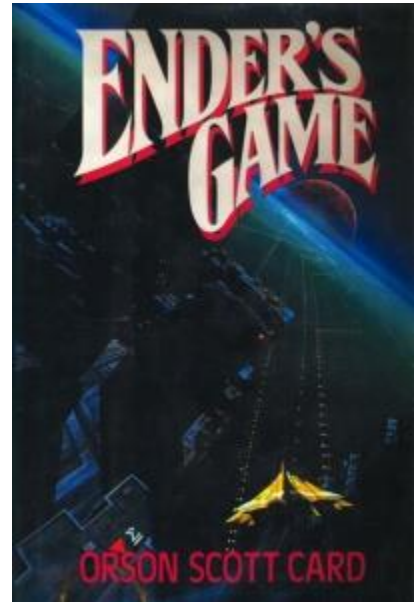


Amanda Eastin

ENTO 896

Book Discussion Guide Assignment

Published in 1985, *Ender's Game* is written by Orson Scott Card. It originated as a short story, later developed into a novel, and four more books followed. The story focuses on the future of Earth after an alien species, the Formics, have attacked. Formics resemble a large version of an Earth insect and behave in a similar manner, leaving the human race to refer to them as “buggers.” In preparation for a further attack, the military begins training children as officers to command the fleet against further bugger attacks. Population control deems that each family can have only two children, but due to the promising performance of his siblings, Andrew Wiggin’s parents are allowed to have a third.



The story begins when Andrew “Ender” Wiggin is selected for military battle training at the age of six years old. The book follows Ender through his battle training and his time in Command School. He learns the details of how to maneuver and command a fleet of ships in space. He studies the behavior of the Formics to learn how to defeat them, and tests the limits of his sanity with the insane schedule and demanding battle games the school initiates. The book ends with the astonishing truth of the games Ender has learned to play.

This story provides a lot of possibilities of discussing insect anatomy, appearance, and behavior. Here are some questions to discuss with the class or book club:

1. What part of the Formics' appearance automatically makes humans see an insect-like creature?
2. What behavior patterns of the Formics are similar to insects on Earth?
3. What insect does Mazer Rackham and Ender Wiggin say the Formics are most like?  
Why do they most resemble this insect?
4. How is their communication similar or different than an insect that lives in a colony?
5. Is the portrayal of the Queens being the only ones with independent thought accurate to actual insect colonies?
6. Would studying insects on Earth have been beneficial to the military's strategy against the Formics?
7. Can the Formics decision to attack Earth be related to realistic insect behavior, movement, or migration?
8. What insects do the Formics most remind you of?
9. Do the Formics look and act like the same kind of insect?
10. While this book is often cited and used for its insight into military motivations and psychology, what can this book teach us about the importance of Entomology?