



The Microscopic Big Five (Beginner)

Observing a nematode



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Promote microscopy
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You have found a nematode

Use this guide to help you observe it. Nematodes are worm-like, with a long slender, wriggling body.

The key things to look for at x40:

- Which end is the mouth? The mouth end is often flat, whereas the tail end tapers to a point.
- Food inside the intestine. Usually you can see a dark line through the nematode, which is the food it has eaten.
- Look for dark oval objects inside the body. You can often see eggs inside larger nematodes.
- Look at the tail. The tail is sticky and often is stuck to a surface or has debris stuck to it.

Draw your nematode and label the features you can see.

Describe what it is doing.

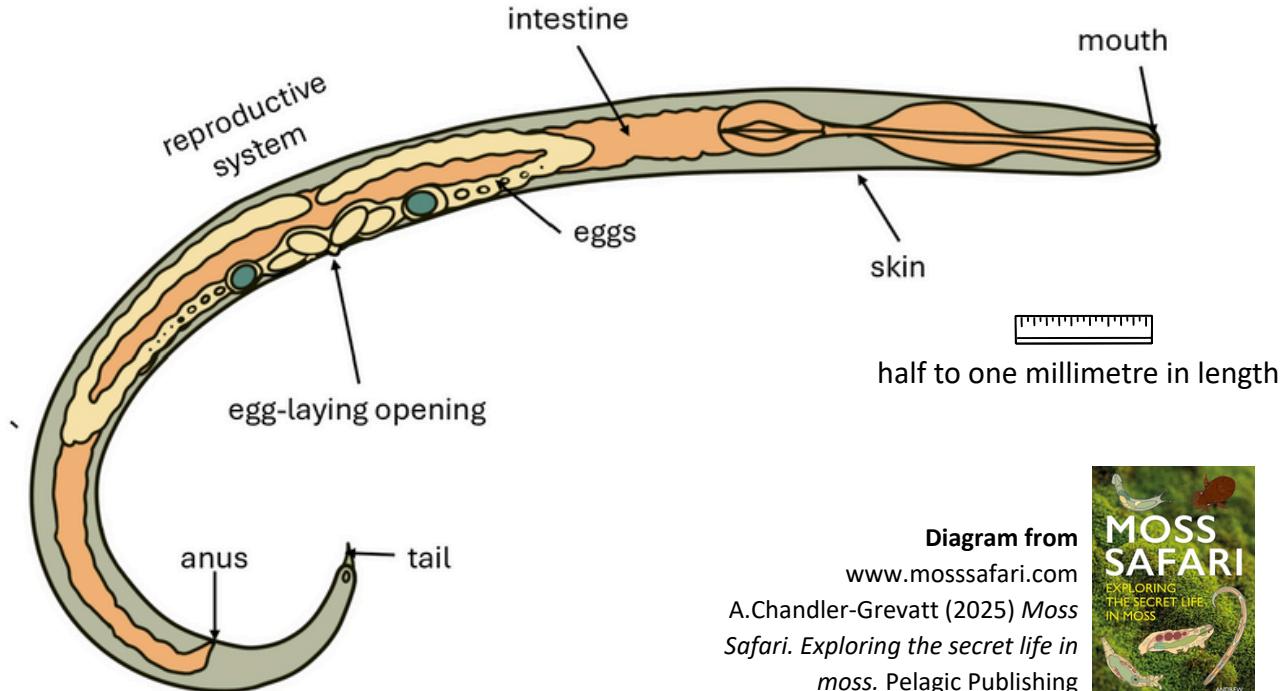


Diagram from
www.mosssafari.com
A.Chandler-Grevatt (2025) *Moss Safari. Exploring the secret life in moss*. Pelagic Publishing



What is it doing?

Nematodes wriggle their bodies to move through moss.
When they are drying out, they curl into a ball.
Sometimes, you will see the nematode is not moving: it could be resting or dead.

So what?

Nematodes live everywhere on Earth.
Scientists have used nematodes to learn about aging, death and treating some diseases.
Research on nematodes has won three Nobel Prizes in science.

