



Tito and the fireflies

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Tito and his friends were outside at night. They were having an adventure.

Suddenly, they saw many lights in the air, like sparks from a fire. There were small glowing lights all around them, blinking on and off!



They flashed their torchlights, trying to see the source of the sparks.

“Are those lights real? What are they?” asked Tito.

“Maybe they are magic creatures,” said Nomalanga.



The creatures producing the lights were insects. The friends started to run after the little lights, trying to catch the insects.



Tito managed to catch a few insects and he put them in a bottle.

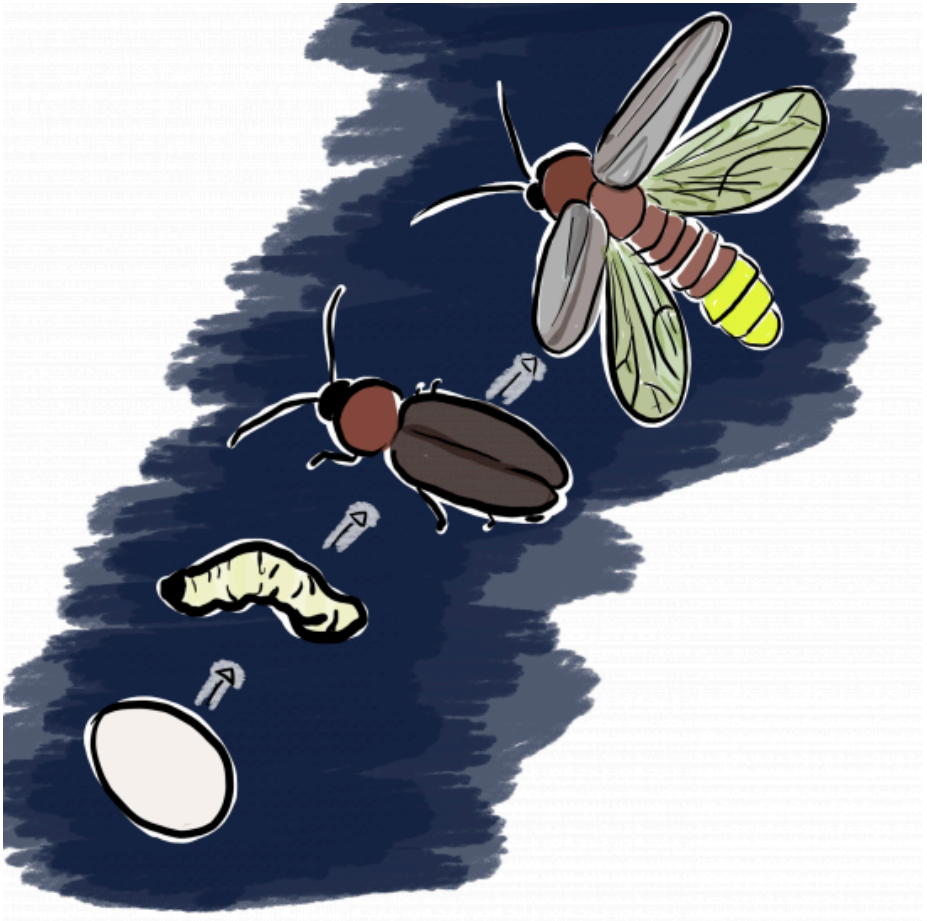
“What are they called?” asked Sizwe, looking into the bottle.

“How do they make that light?” wondered Tito.



"That insect is a firefly. And it isn't a fly, it is a beetle," said Tito's older sister, Gcina.

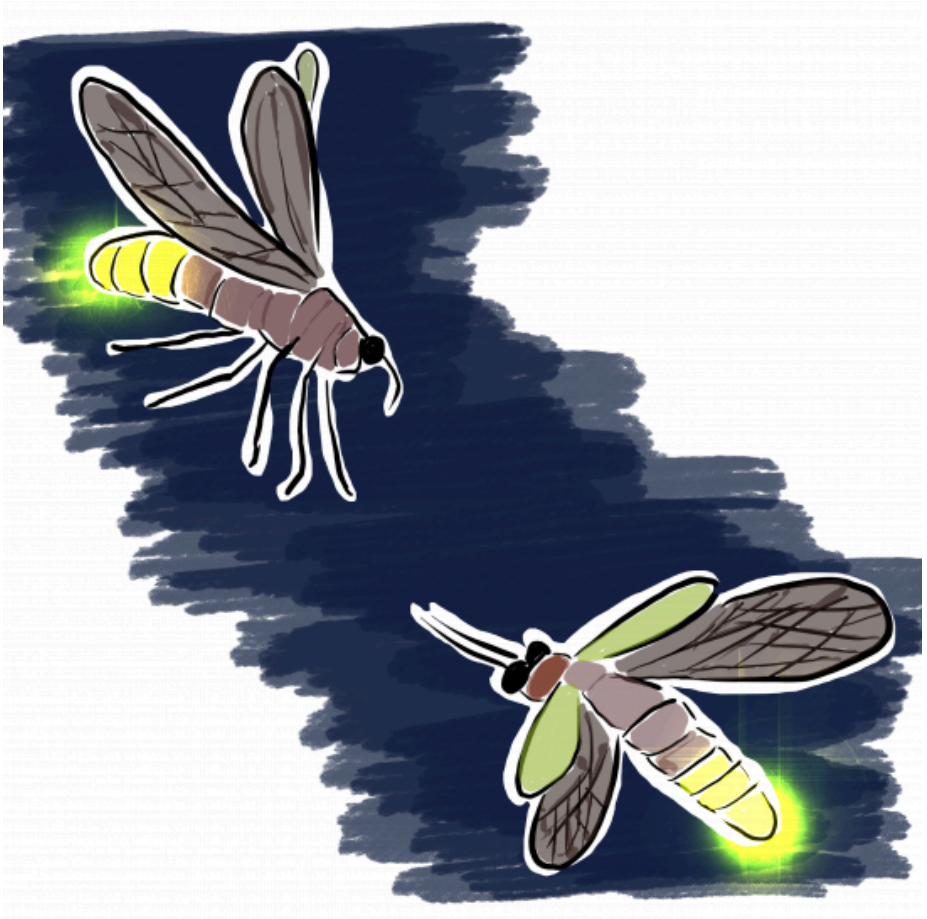
"The light is from the insect's body," she said. "I learned about fireflies at school!" she added.



A firefly starts life as a larva, which hatches from an egg.

Female fireflies lay eggs in the soil. The larvae hatch underground. The larvae grow and develop into beetles.

The beetles have wings when they crawl out of the soil.



Some fireflies use chemical signals to attract their mates.

The insect makes a chemical that causes its body to glow. Fireflies look for the lights to find one another.



"You know so much!" said Tito to his sister.

Gcina replied, "I know everything. Now, it's time to go to sleep. Let the fireflies fly."

Tito let the sparkling lights fly from the bottle, into the night.



Ulwazi Lwethu is a Zenex Foundation funded and initiated project to develop a series of graded and leisure African language readers and teacher support materials. This project is targeted at teaching and supporting learners in the Foundation Phase to improve their home language reading and understanding. The readers have been originated in nine African languages in collaboration with Molteno Institute for Language and Literacies, Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development, Room to Read South Africa, and Saide. All resources are developed as Open Education Resources (OER).



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Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Assurer/s: African Storybook

Language: English



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