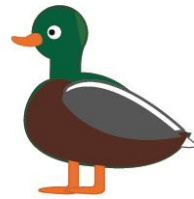


OVERVIEW

This activity is an outdoor scavenger hunt. Students are introduced to the science of ecology as they search for different roles and relationships found between living and non-living organisms.

MATERIALS

- Scavenger hunt worksheet (page 3)
- Clipboards
- Pencil or pen



ACTIVITY

PART A:

Introduce the vocabulary terms below to students. Ask students to list examples of each. Students can write, draw, or collage their lists.

- Which term would humans fall under?
- Are humans a part of more than one list?

VOCABULARY TERMS

Ecology is the study of connections between living things and their environment.

An Herbivore is an animal that only eats plants.

A Carnivore is an animal that only eats other animals. They can be hunters, or scavengers that feed on dead animals.

An Omnivore is an animal that eats both plants and animals.

A Decomposer is a small creature that eats the remains of dead plants or animals. They are nature's cleaners and play an important part in the environment.

A Predator is an animal that hunts for its food.

Prey are animals that are hunted for food.

THEME

Explore connections and relationships in an urban environment between living and non-living organisms.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Collect, organize, and interpret data.
- Discover, observe, and recognize connections between living elements.
- Recognize biodiversity and ecological diversity in their own communities.

SUBJECTS

Interdependent relationships in ecosystems

SKILLS

Using evidence to support arguments, recognizing cause and effect patterns, developing solutions

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIALS

Suggested for facilitator

- Wildlife Basic Information Packet
- WildlifeNYC website
nyc.gov/wildlife

A Consumer is any living creature that eats something else. They include herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores.

A Producer starts every food chain. Producers are plants. They grow and make their own food using solar energy.

Minerals are the ingredients that make up rocks. They create the different colors and crystals you find in rocks.

Animal Scat is a word used by scientists to describe animal poop.

An Animal Track is a mark left behind as an animal moves across the ground. Mud, sand, and snow are the best places to look for animal tracks.

PART B:

Explore an outdoor area with students. A walk through the neighborhood, a school recess yard, or a local park are all great location options. Download and read “Tips for Successful Learning in the Great Outdoors” from the introduction letter to help guide you in choosing your location.

Students will look for items that match the scavenger hunt clues on their worksheet. Once a clue is found, students should draw a quick pencil sketch in the box.

Upon completion, discuss the activity together. Students can share what they found for each clue and their observations. Spend time discussing clues which could not be found. Where can students look next time? As inspiration, use the list of examples previously created. Did “human” answer any clues? If so, which ones and what connection did you observe between humans and the urban environment?

EXTENSION:

Now students can create an urban ecology story. Select five clues from the scavenger hunt and ask students to create a story which links and connects each of the clues, such as a predator-prey relationship or a living thing to its habitat. As the facilitator, you can decide the format for these stories based on your resources and time constraints. Students can work alone and write/draw their story. Or, working in a group, students can each select one clue to portray and create a short skit weaving each clue together. To be a true ecology story, the connections should be circular: each clue connects to another and connects back to the beginning. For an extra challenge, add “human” as one of the clues, and include a positive connection to and from it.

A decomposer	A producer	Signs of a hungry insect	Animal scat	An animal nest
An animal with feathers	A predator	Something wet or in water	Something with fur	A prey
Something flying	A consumer	Someone studying ecology	A needle-shaped leaf	A carnivore
Rock minerals	A herbivore	Signs of a mammal living nearby	An animal track	Something growing
A non-living thing	Animal that lives underground	A dead tree	An omnivore	Solar energy