

Field Investigations in a Local Ecosystem

Objective:

- To investigate a local ecosystem for characteristics that are not noticeable by visual observation alone.
- To investigate the interdependence of biological organisms and their non-living environment.

Materials:

one bag
strips of paper printed with the individual tasks
3 or more yardsticks
bird and tree ID references
one trash bag
one pair of rubber gloves

Procedure:

Before class:

Xerox the "individual tasks" lists and cut them into separate assignments. Fold them in half and place them in a bag.

During class:

Each student chooses at least 1 random task from the bag. Some students may need to measure heights or lengths with the yardsticks. Other students may want to identify local organisms. One student may need the trash bag and rubber gloves to pick up trash in the area of study.

Throughout the activity, encourage students to help each other accomplish their tasks together. Some students will need more assistance than others. A method of determining whether each student has completed their task may be helpful. ***Note: It is very important to stress that collecting samples is NOT necessary for this assignment and may be harmful to the ecosystem.***

Assessment:

Sharing the group's findings at the end of the lesson is an excellent way to assess what the class has accomplished and an opportunity to record unique discoveries that could be helpful to use again in later

activities. Inventories of local ecosystems are a valuable tool for studying the local environment as well.

Further studies and Applications:

This activity can be modified to suit a variety of ecosystems available for investigation.