



ECOSYSTEM SCAVENGER HUNT

Búsqueda de tesoros ecológicos

Grades		
K-8	Whole Class	60 minutes

Purpose

Students will look around their school campus to find examples of the interactions between plants, animals, and humans.

Materials

Student Activity Sheets
Pencil

Concepts

- Plants support all forms of animal life.
- Some organisms live together for mutual benefit (symbiotic relationship).
- Food chains are feeding relationships that transfer energy through a natural community.
- Wildlife and humans often share the same environment and are all subject to environmental problems.

Conceptos

- Las plantas sostienen a todas las formas de vida animal.
- Algunos organismos viven juntos para beneficio mutuo (relación simbiótica).
- Las cadenas alimentarias son relaciones alimentarias que transfieren energía a través de una comunidad natural.
- La vida silvestre y los seres humanos a menudo comparten el mismo medio ambiente y todos deben enfrentar problemas ambientales.

Safety

Remind students they should avoid picking up any unknown plants, animals, or debris. Define boundaries that students are not to cross.

Vocabulary

Ecosystem
Food chains
Food webs
Producer
Consumer
Decomposer
Predator
Prey
Symbiotic relationship

Vocabulario

Ecosistema
Cadenas alimentarias
Redes alimentarias
Productor
Consumidor
Descomponedor
Predador
Presa
Relación simbiótica

In Advance

Make copies of the Student Activity Sheet appropriate for your grade level. (With very young students, consider reading each question on the Student Activity Sheet and have them draw their answers on a sheet of paper.) Identify an outdoor space suitable for the scavenger hunt.

Procedure

1. Define vocabulary words

Using the list of definitions below, discuss the vocabulary words that students will need to know to do their scavenger hunt.

Ecosystem—a community of living organisms that interact with each other and the non-living environment. An ecosystem can be as large as a rainforest or as small as a rotting log.

Food chains—the feeding relationships that transfer energy through a community of organisms, starting with producers and moving through herbivores and carnivores.

Food webs—an interwoven series of food chains.

Producer—an organism that makes its own food using the energy from the sun.
Most producers are plants.

Consumer—an organism that gets its energy from eating other organisms.

Decomposer—an organism that feeds on dead organisms.

Predator—an animal that kills and eats other animals to obtain energy.

Prey—an animal that is hunted and eaten by a predator.

Symbiotic relationship—a condition where two organisms live together for mutual benefit.

2. Describe the scavenger hunt and take students outside

Tell students they will be going on a scavenger hunt to look for examples of the different components and relationships within an ecosystem. Give each student a copy of the Student Activity Sheet and be sure all students have a pencil or pen. (See Modifications section for ideas about how to conduct the scavenger hunt with very young students.) Divide students into groups of four and tell the groups they will be working together to find the items on the scavenger hunt.

Take students outside. Describe the boundaries for the scavenger hunt and remind students to leave natural areas undisturbed. Tell students to meet you at a designated area when they are finished or when they need help, and begin the scavenger hunt.

3. Review findings

Return to the classroom. Review each item on the scavenger hunt list, asking students what examples they were able to find.

Questions to Ask During the Activity

1. What was the easiest thing to find on the scavenger hunt?
2. What was the hardest thing to find on the scavenger hunt?
3. Was there anything on the list that you did not find?
4. Are there other types of ecosystems where the items on the scavenger hunt would be easier or harder to find?

Preguntas sobre el tema de la actividad

1. ¿Qué fue lo más fácil de encontrar en la búsqueda ecológica?
2. ¿Qué fue lo más difícil de encontrar en la búsqueda ecológica?
3. ¿Hubo algo de la lista que no hayas podido encontrar?
4. ¿Hay otros tipos de ecosistemas donde habría sido más fácil o más difícil encontrar los elementos de la búsqueda ecológica?

Modifications

For grades K-3, select one or two versions of the scavenger hunt. With younger students who are not yet able to read or write, give each student a sheet of paper and a pencil. Using Student Activity Sheet 2, read one item on the scavenger hunt and have students look for an example of the item. When they have found an example, tell them to make a drawing of the item on their paper. Read several more items from the scavenger hunt, one at a time, giving students time to search in between. Return to the classroom and discuss the items they found.

Extensions

Have students take a copy of the Student Activity Sheet home. With their family, ask students to look for the scavenger hunt items near their home. In the classroom, compare the ecosystem at the school with the ones near students' homes.

References

The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. Proyecto Futuro Life Science Curriculum. First Edition. Albuquerque, NM, 1996.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt (4-8)

Without disturbing the plants and animals, see how many of the scavenger hunt items you can find and write your discoveries on the line below each item.

1. Find an example of how a plant *directly* supports the life of an animal.

2. Find an example of how a plant *indirectly* supports the life of an animal.

3. Find evidence that an animal lives here.

4. Find an example of a predator.

5. Find an example of a prey animal.

6. Find evidence of a food chain and write down, in order, the organisms in this food chain.

7. Find evidence of a symbiotic relationship (two organisms that live together and benefit from the relationship).

8. Describe how both organisms benefit from the symbiotic relationship.

9. Find an example of how an insect has damaged a plant.

10. Find an example of a plant that has been damaged by disease.

11. Find an example of something that is decomposing.

12. Find an example of how wildlife and humans are sharing this environment.

13. Find an example of an environmental problem in this area.

14. Explain how humans are dealing with the environmental problem.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt (K-3)

Without disturbing the plants and animals, see how many of the scavenger hunt items you can find. Write or draw your findings in the box next to each item.

Scavenger Hunt I

A producer.		Something recycled.	
Something older than you.		An animal sign.	
Something younger than you.		A decomposer.	
Something left over from last winter.		Something yellow, red, or blue.	
Something that feels smooth.		Something that shouldn't be here.	

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt (K-3)

Without disturbing the plants and animals, see how many of the scavenger hunt items you can find. Write or draw your findings in the box next to each item.

Scavenger Hunt 2

A seed.		Something that shows an insect was here.	
Something that smells good.		A leaf with smooth edges.	
Something younger than you.		The largest living thing.	
An animal home.		Something really weird.	
Something that feels fuzzy.		Something that shouldn't be here.	

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt (K-3)

Without disturbing the plants and animals, see how many of the scavenger hunt items you can find. Write or draw your findings in the box next to each item.

Scavenger Hunt 3

A producer.		Something recycled.	
Something older than you.		An animal sign.	
The tiniest living thing.		Something really weird.	
Something with wings and six legs.		Something yellow, red, or blue.	
Something that feels smooth.		Something that shouldn't be here.	

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Ecosystem Scavenger Hunt (K-3)

Without disturbing the plants and animals, see how many of the scavenger hunt items you can find. Write or draw your findings in the box next to each item.

Scavenger Hunt 4

A producer.		Something that stores water.	
Something that is older than you.		A leaf with rough edges.	
A seed.		Something being decomposed.	
Something that shows a consumer was here.		Something really weird.	
Something that feels fuzzy.		Something that shouldn't be here.	

ACTIVIDADES PRÁCTICAS PARA EL ESTUDIANTE

Búsqueda ecológica (4-8)

Sin perturbar ni a las plantas ni a los animales, trata de encontrar la mayor cantidad posible de tesoros ecológicos y anota tus descubrimientos en la línea correspondiente.

1. Encuentra un ejemplo de cómo una planta colabora *directamente* con la vida de un animal.

2. Encuentra un ejemplo de cómo una planta colabora *indirectamente* con la vida de un animal.

3. Encuentra alguna prueba de que un animal habita en esta área.

4. Encuentra un ejemplo de un predador.

5. Encuentra un ejemplo de un animal de presa.

6. Encuentra alguna prueba de la existencia de una cadena alimentaria y anota en orden los organismos que forman parte de esta cadena.

7. Encuentra alguna prueba de una relación simbiótica (dos organismos que viven juntos y se benefician de su relación).

8. Describe cómo se benefician de la relación simbiótica ambos organismos.

9. Encuentra un ejemplo de cómo un insecto ha dañado a una planta.

10. Encuentra un ejemplo de una planta que haya sido dañada por una enfermedad.

11. Encuentra un ejemplo de algo que se esté descomponiendo.

12. Encuentra un ejemplo de cómo la vida silvestre y los seres humanos comparten este medio ambiente.

13. Encuentra un ejemplo de un problema del medio ambiente en esta área.

14. Explica por qué los seres humanos están enfrentando problemas del medio ambiente.

ACTIVIDADES PRÁCTICAS PARA EL ESTUDIANTE

Búsqueda de tesoros ecológicos (K-3)

Sin perturbar ni a las plantas ni a los animales, trata de encontrar la mayor cantidad posible de tesoros ecológicos y anota tus descubrimientos en la línea correspondiente.

Búsqueda ecológica I

Un productor.		Algo reciclado.	
Algo más viejo que tú		Un indicio de un animal.	
Algo más joven que tú.		Un descomponedor.	
Algo que haya quedado del último invierno.		Algo amarillo, rojo o azul.	
Algo que se siente suave al tacto.		Algo que no debería estar aquí.	

ACTIVIDADES PRÁCTICAS PARA EL ESTUDIANTE

Búsqueda de tesoros ecológicos (K-3)

Sin perturbar ni a las plantas ni a los animales, trata de encontrar la mayor cantidad posible de tesoros ecológicos y anota tus descubrimientos en la línea correspondiente.

Búsqueda ecológica 2

Una semilla.		Un indicio de que un insecto estuvo aquí.	
Algo que huele bien.		Una hoja con bordes lisos.	
Algo más joven que tú.		El ser vivo más grande.	
El hogar de un animal.		Algo realmente raro.	
Algo que se siente veloso.		Algo que no debería estar aquí.	

ACTIVIDADES PRÁCTICAS PARA EL ESTUDIANTE

Búsqueda de tesoros ecológicos (K-3)

Sin perturbar ni a las plantas ni a los animales, trata de encontrar la mayor cantidad posible de tesoros ecológicos y anota tus descubrimientos en la línea correspondiente.

Búsqueda ecológica 3

Un productor.		Algo reciclado.	
Algo más viejo que tú.		Un indicio de un animal.	
El ser vivo más pequeño.		Algo realmente raro.	
Algo con alas y seis patas.		Algo amarillo, rojo o azul.	
Algo que se siente suave al tacto.		Algo que no debería estar aquí.	

ACTIVIDADES PRÁCTICAS PARA EL ESTUDIANTE

Búsqueda de tesoros ecológicos (K-3)

Sin perturbar ni a las plantas ni a los animales, trata de encontrar la mayor cantidad posible de tesoros ecológicos y anota tus descubrimientos en la línea correspondiente.

Búsqueda ecológica 4

Un productor.		Algo que almacena agua.	
Algo más viejo que tú.		Una hoja con bordes irregulares.	
Una semilla.		Algo que se está descomponiendo.	
Un indicio que un consumidor ha estado aquí.		Algo realmente raro.	
Algo que se siente vellosa.		Algo que no debería estar aquí.	