

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 45 MINS

Observing and Recording Habitats

Students select a habitat, observe it, and record their observations.

GRADES

3 - 5

SUBJECTS

Biology

CONTENTS

6 Images

OVERVIEW

Students select a habitat, observe it, and record their observations.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/observing-recording-habitats/>

Program

bioblitz

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students look at the photo gallery.

Show students the photo gallery. Ask: *What are the students doing?* Explain that they are observing and recording in the field. If relevant, use the Background Information to introduce the concept of a BioBlitz.

2. Have students choose a habitat to observe.

Ask students to select a familiar “habitat”—such as a classroom, home, or playground—to observe and record. Students will make observations about this place and the organisms that live there. They will record these observations so they can be studied and shared.

3. Encourage students to use their five senses.

Explain to students that scientists use their senses to notice details. They make observations about a place and the organisms that live there. Then they record their observations so they can be studied and shared. Remind students to use all of their senses to observe their habitat.

Ask: What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell?

4. Remind students to include details.

Review some of the details students might observe and record, such as size, color, markings, shape, texture, sounds, smells, location, or overall impressions.

5. Have students analyze the illustration.

Explain to students that there are many ways to record observations. Tell students they can write in a field notebook, draw illustrations, make maps, take photographs, or make video or audio recordings. Have students look at the illustration, which includes field notes and a field sketch. *Ask: Which senses did this scientist use? What details are recorded?*

6. Have students observe and record their habitats.

Ask students to observe and record their habitats. Then have them share their work. Encourage them to point out natural and human-made elements.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Biology

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- select and observe a habitat
- use field skills to record their observations

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Applying
 - Understanding

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

- (K-4) Standard C-1:

The characteristics of organisms

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

A BioBlitz is a way for communities to learn about the biological diversity of a geographical area and to better understand how to protect the species found at that location. In order to undertake a BioBlitz, students need to have a specific set of skills. These skills involve observing natural phenomena, identifying different species of organisms, classifying them into categories, and mapping the data for conservation and management in the future. Scientists record observations in many ways, including with photographs, sketches, and notes.

Prior Knowledge

Recommended Prior Activities

- [Adopt a Vacant Lot](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
bioblitz	noun	a field study in which groups of scientists and citizens study and inventory all the different kinds of living organisms within a given area.
fieldwork	noun	scientific studies done outside of a lab, classroom, or office.

For Further Exploration

Websites

- [National Geographic: BioBlitz](#)

PARTNER



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