

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

A student safari to discover the habitat within one yard.

TYPE OF ACTIVITY: Nature and Outdoors, Content Connection

MINIMUM TIME NEEDED FOR ACTIVITY: 45 Min

GRADE LEVEL: 4th and up

SUBJECT AREA: Science, Mindfulness

MATERIALS:

- Yardstick
- Paper (journal?), pencil, clipboard

SET UP:

1. Give each student, or pair of students, a yardstick or a piece of string one yard long.
2. Have the student lay the yardstick down on the lawn/bare dirt, etc (avoid cement or tarmac)

PLAY:

1. Have students begin at one end of their yardstick and work their way toward the other, document everything they see. Encourage them to go as close to the ground and as slowly as possible.
 - Students may write words or draw pictures or a combination.
 - If drawing, encourage them to label either with names or description to be able to find out later what it is.
 - If a student is done within 10 minutes, have them go back and look closer, at each ½ inch increment, slide it a few inches to the left or right.
2. Once back gathered as a class.
 - Compare how many things were the same.
 - Compare how many things were different.
 - What surprised you?
 - What do you want to know more about?
 - How did each of those things get there? (grew, moved, fell, carried by wind or animal, etc)
 - Were places different that were in the sun, shade, near a tree, near a parking lot or sidewalk or puddle?
 - Describe the difference between habitat, ecosystem and environment.

VARIATIONS:

- Choose an 8 ½ x 11” piece of paper and lay it down- use edges to define the space. Find everything “in that piece of paper”
- Find/define everything within a square foot.
- With permission from principal and building maintenance, find/define everything within a cubic foot.
 - Dig a hole 12” square and 12” deep. Put the dirt on a tarp or in a plastic tote. Have students “dissect” the dirt. Have students draw or identify the organisms (living and dead), plants and plant parts, types of rock and decaying matter.
 - Re-place all of the dirt, sod and living creatures that were removed from that area.

- Bring a section of a rotting log into the classroom/to a table outside. Have students “dissect” the log in small increments to find different living organisms, evidence of living organisms, or items in the process of decaying. Can students tell the story of this tree?
 - Have students write a story from the tree’s perspective- as a young sapling, a mature tree or as the fallen tree.
- Press one of each leaves and stems of plants discovered. include empty shells, pods, dead insects. Mount and label.
- Shorten the length of discovery to a foot, and include a magnifying glass.

STANDARDS:

NGSS > Life Sciences > From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes; Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

NGSS > Earth and Space Sciences > Earth’s Systems; Earth and Human Activity

NGSS > Physical Science > Matter and Its Interactions

