

Educator Curriculum: Lower Elementary, PreK through 2nd Grade

Wildlife Scavenger Hunt

Background

On this field trip, students will use observation and deductive reasoning skills to find objects in the park that are the result of animals' interactions with the environment.

Overview

Scientists use observation and deductive reasoning skills to learn about nature. Through observation, scientists can learn about character traits, identify relationships, understand behaviors, etc. With deductive reasoning, scientists can delve deeper into these findings by applying universal laws. For example, if one *observes* a track in the ground, we can *deduce* that an animal made that track, because tracks are almost always made by animals.

In this activity, student groups will be searching for a) strict observations, "Observations," and b) observations that were deduced through reasoning, "Evidence." This activity is especially good for the park where we may not be able to directly see evidence of animal life.

Materials

Hand lenses (optional), clipboards, pencils, Wildlife Scavenger Hunt (PDF)

Procedure

Divide the students into groups. Each group receives a Wildlife Scavenger Hunt worksheet.

Establish a well-defined boundary in which students must stay during the scavenger hunt. Once they find an item they are to describe it in detail on the worksheet. Younger students may draw what they find in the boxes provided. Be sure students label what they draw. When engaged in this activity, caution children not to hurt any animals or damage their homes. They should not pull leaves, thorns, or anything off of a living plant (or animal).

Assessment

Discuss with your students the concepts of making strict observations and of making conclusions through deductive reasoning. How do observations and conclusions through reasoning differ? How are they the same?