

Forest Fundamentals Pre-Trip Activities

To prepare your students for the investigations they will do on site, we recommend doing these activities prior to your visit.

Construct An Ecosystem

Purpose:

To discover what students know about the forest ecosystem

Materials:

- Scissors
- Glue/Tape
- Crayons/Markers
- Paper, various types

Steps:

1. Share with the students that in order to get ready for the field trip to the prairie, they will create a mural of the forest.
2. Ask: What do you think we will see, smell, touch, and hear in the woods? Have some students share a few ideas.
3. Divide students into small groups and have each group create a mural of as many things they can think of they will see, smell, touch, and hear in the forest.
4. Pass out the supplies and allow students time to make their mural. Encourage students to make their parts in 3-dimensional form.
5. When the groups are done, allow them to share their murals with each other.

A B C Sort (Abiotic, Biotic & Cultural)

Purpose:

To encourage the students to classify objects and think about relationships between categories

Materials:

- 1 set of cards for each group of students

Steps:

1. Make enough copies of the cards on the following page for each group of students.
2. In small groups, have the students sort the cards as they choose. Discuss their sorting methods and choices.
3. Then ask the students to sort the cards by the following categories: Non-Living, Living or was living, Made by People.
4. Discuss the choices and categories. Explain that the scientific words for the categories are: Abiotic, Biotic, and Cultural.
5. Discuss how the various abiotic (non-living) factors impact the living and cultural factors. For example, the temperature will impact which plants can live in an area.

Note: Since rivers and soil have both abiotic and biotic components in them, they can make for great student discussions and fit between both categories.

Literature Connections

Life in the Woodlands Two-Can Editors, *One Small Square: Woods* by D. Silver



Bird



Tree



Flower



Water



Rock



Scat



Road



Table

Forest Fundamentals Post-Trip Activities

These activities will build upon the learning experiences from the field trip, we recommend doing these activities after your visit.

Ecosystem Mural Revisited

Purpose:

To assess what students learned about the forest ecosystem

Materials:

- Colored pencils/markers

Steps:

1. Share with the students that they will get to show how much they now know about the forest.
2. Review the sights, smells, sounds, and items touched during the field trip.
3. Have each student in the group draw two items to the mural that were not on the mural to begin with.
4. What types of factors were missing most? Were they biotic (living) or abiotic (non-living)? How many groups added soil? Air? Sun? Reinforce that an ecosystem is the biotic and abiotic factors interacting.
5. If time permits, discuss what might happen to the forest plants if the amount of rain increased? Decreased? What about the air temperature?

Forest Leaf Collage

Purpose:

To assess what the students learned about the forest

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencil/Markers/Crayons
- (Optional) Additional resources

Steps:

1. Share with the students that they will get to show how much they now know about the forest.
2. Review their notes about their forest in their journals, and, if needed use additional resources.
3. Using the supplies, have students create a life-size replica of one leaf from a forest plant. They can write, or draw, one thing they learned about the forest.
4. The leaves can be displayed in the class and/or shown to younger students in a different grade.

Literature Connections

Life in the Woodlands Two-Can Editors, *One Small Square: Woods* by D. Silver