

AFTER YOU VISIT THE GARDEN...

Lesson Ideas for Grade 4

Activity #4: It's all connected

Note that this activity is linked to Activity #2. You may choose to complete this activity without completing Activity #2, however, be sure to look over the background and procedure described there to provide students with any necessary background.

Lesson objective:

Students will compare the results of their field observations with each other, and understand that animals in an ecosystem depend on both living and non-living components for survival.

Materials:

Chart paper or black/white board
Ecosystem cards (from pre-visit activity)
Non-living component cards
Ball of yarn

Introduction:

1. Ask students to share evidence of the food web they observed at the Japanese garden. Ask them to identify
2. Draw a large T-chart on the board or on chart paper. Have students share their list of living and non-living components in the garden ecosystem, recording the items on the chart.
3. Discuss the non-living components, asking students to conclude how the animals or plants in the ecosystem use the object for survival. (For an animal to survive, they must have food, water, space, and shelter) Some non-living components observed might not normally be used for survival, such as signs or benches—however, students may find that some animals have made them part of their habitat.

Activity:

4. Have students sit in a circle, as in the pre-visit activity #2.
5. Explain to students that they are going to make another web, but this time it will contain non-living components as well as plants and animals. Remind the class that some of the plant cards from the last activity might provide shelter as well as food.
6. Provide an ecosystem card (including non-living components) to each student.

7. As before, begin with the teacher as the sun (also a non-living component), and have students raise their hands if they have a card with a living thing that depends on the sun for survival. Choose a plant to pass the yarn to, and continue as before. This time students may represent non-living things that connect at different points in the web. Also, as mentioned, the relationships may be more than food-related (e.g. bird needs tree for nesting). As before, when students show their card, they must explain why they would be connected to the previous student.
8. By the end of the activity, there should again be a complex web of yarn in the circle.
9. This time, have students representing non-living components of an ecosystem gently tug at their threads. Ask students to raise their hand if they felt the pull. Emphasize that a healthy *ecosystem* requires places for plants and animals to live, as well as things to eat.



