



Subject/Target Grade

Science
Upper Elementary & Middle School (4-6)

Duration

30 minutes – Classroom setting

Materials

per class

- set of *Forest Ecosystem Picture Cards* (32 cards) – teacher should laminate these before using

Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations

Science:

- Identify organisms as part of a food chain or food web. **L.EC.04.11**
- Classify producers, consumers, and decomposers based on their source of food (the source of energy and building materials). **L.OL.06.51**

Who Am I?

This activity was partly adapted with permission from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) – Calgary/Banff Chapter Education Program. For more information about CPAWS, visit <http://www.cpaaws.org/education>.

Lesson Overview

This two-part activity provides reinforcement in understanding the terms producer, consumer, decomposer, predator, prey, and food chain. In the first part, students become familiar with how these terms can be used to classify living things; they then formulate questions using the terms. In the second part, students utilize the related vocabulary to participate in a guessing game.

Objective

Students will be able to:

1. Apply the terms producer, consumer, decomposer, predator, prey, carnivore, omnivore, and herbivore.

Advance Preparation

Prepare the set of *Forest Ecosystem Picture Cards*, with a string attached to each one so students may wear them around their necks. Twine is recommended because it tends to tangle less than yarn or string.

Note: As there is not a card for “humans,” you may want to make one to add to your set of *Forest Ecosystem Picture Cards*.

Procedure



Note: In some cases, the students will not be a part of any group and should remain off to the side.

Part A:

1. Introduce the activity and review (or introduce) related vocabulary.

Students sit in a large semicircle facing the front of the room so that they can see each other easily. Provide a *Forest Ecosystem Picture Card* for each student to wear around his/her neck. Explain to the students that these cards represent some different living things that could be found within a forest ecosystem. Have students introduce “who they are.” Ask students to brainstorm some ways in which these organisms depend upon one another in order to survive. List students’ ideas on the board.

Ask students where these different organisms obtain their energy (plants get their energy from the sun, while other organisms must eat plants or other animals).

Introduce or review the following terms: *producer, consumer, decomposer, herbivore, omnivore, carnivore, predator, prey, and food chain.*

2. Classify students according to the card they are wearing.

Ask the students to think about what they are, and then give them the following instructions:

When I say “go,” I want everyone to move (walk quietly) into groups of ...

- first time: ***producer, consumer, and decomposer***
- second time: ***predator, prey***
- third time: ***carnivore, omnivore, and herbivore***
- fourth time: ***food chains (of 3 or more)***

Part B:

3. Explain the “Who Am I?” guessing game.

Collect all of the *Forest Ecosystem Picture Cards* and then tell the students that they will play a short guessing game, called “Who Am I?” Ask for a student volunteer to come to the front of the class. Tell all of the students that you are going to hang one of the picture cards on the back of the student so he/she cannot see it. The other students must not talk while you give the instructions to the game.

Tell the students that the object of the game is for the student to identify what he/she is by asking questions about what part of the ecosystem he/she is. The student must do this by asking at least two or three questions of the rest of the class that use the following terms: producer, consumer, decomposer, predator, prey, herbivore, omnivore, carnivore, and food chain. All questions must be worded so that they may be answered by YES or NO. Examples of questions they might ask include, “Am I an herbivore?” “Am I a predator?” Remind the rest of the class that they are only allowed to reply to other questions with YES or NO answers. When the student thinks he/she knows what he/she is, he/she can guess the answer (raccoon, tree, snake, etc.).

4. Play the “Who Am I?” guessing game.

Allow the first student to begin asking questions. The teacher should monitor all questions and answers to make sure students understand the rules of the game. Assist the student at the front of the room with formulating questions, as necessary.

If, after asking at least two or three questions using the required vocabulary words, more information is needed for the student to guess what he/she is, the student may ask more general yes/no questions about an organism's habitat, physical characteristics, or behavior, e.g., "Do I live in the water?" "Can I fly?" "Do I have four legs?"

After the game has been played a few times, students generally have a good feel for what type of questions to ask. Depending on the amount of available time, have additional students try to guess "who they are."

Modification

Mystery Organism Game. Hang a *Forest Ecosystem Picture Card* on the back of each student (without letting him/her see). Have students circulate around the classroom asking each other questions until they are able to guess what organism they are. When they have made the correct guess, they should move the card to their front side.

Assessment Options

No formal assessment.

Extensions

1. **Create-a-Game.** Challenge students to make up their own games using similar objectives and then teach it to the class.
2. **Who Am I?, Expanded.** Use photographs of additional Michigan organisms (e.g., from a magazine) to play the game with other organisms.

Additional Resources

Go Wild with Wisconsin Wildcards! Educators' Kit, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WNDR) This 128 page activity guide, designed for use with grades 3-8, may be downloaded for free from the web site listed below. The guide is designed to be used with a set of picture cards (called *Wisconsin Wildcards*) produced by the WDNR. However, many of the activities may also be adapted for use with the *Forest Ecosystem* and *Invasive Species Picture Card* sets provided with the MEECS Ecosystems & Biodiversity Unit. Retrieved December, 12, 2005, from <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/ee/teacher/wildcardguide.htm>.

