

Examine a Rotting Log Lesson

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School or Agency: St. Anne Wetland Education Outreach Project

Grade Level(s): 4th and 5th grade

Science Topic: Decomposition and soil formation

Summary: Students will examine decomposition in a rotting log, and how its decomposition is a part of the ecosystem and essential for biodiversity.

Core Content: **SC-EP-2.3.1 SC-05-4.7.1**

Objectives: Students will be able to identify decomposition, cyclical ecosystems, a part of the ecosystem of the wetland.

Materials: Gloves, hand lens, and worksheet

Procedures:

1. The teacher breaks off a piece of the rotting log while wearing gloves, passes it around to students, who should also be wearing gloves. Don't attempt to handle spiders or centipeds.
2. Students should observe not only the piece of the log, but where it was removed from, and the area around it.
3. Look for insects, worms, beetles, fungi, mosses, etc.
4. Have students answer the worksheet.

Assessment Techniques: Participation in activity and overall understanding of the concept by the end of the activity can be assessed.

Resources:

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=1662>

Handouts: See attached page.

Name:

Describe the following:

1. Whole log:

2. Area around the log:

3. Piece of log examined:

Is this wood dead or alive? How can you tell?

Did you see anything growing or living in the log?

What is happening to the log?

What is the name of this process?

Why is this important to the ecosystem?