

Forest Finds: ABC Scavenger Hunt



Primary / Elementary Activity (ages 4 to 9)

Students practice their observation skills, get to know their local “natural” neighbourhood or park, and explore the concepts of living and non-living things. Ideally this would be done in a forested or wooded area, but any park or green space with some trees works well.

Note: This is also a good “buddy” class activity, where older students help younger ones complete their list.

Materials Needed

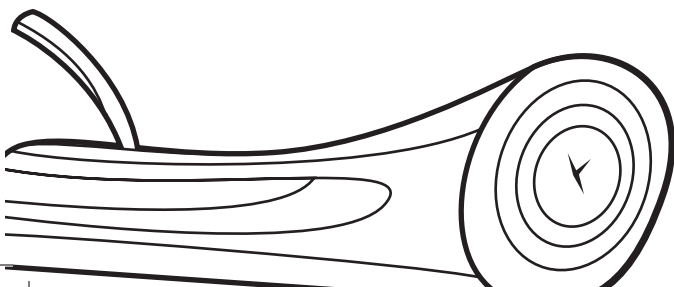
- *Forest Finds ABC Scavenger Hunt Checklist* on the following page (one copy per student) OR a picture list (for non-readers) of local natural things;
- Pencils
- Clipboards
- Outdoors: a wooded area

Instructions

1. Provide each participant with a copy of the Biodiversity ABC Scavenger Hunt Checklist. Before heading outside, give students a few examples of things in nature that they could match to the letters: e.g. Ant, Bark, Clouds, Dirt, etc. For children unable to read well, use pictures of local things in nature on a worksheet to help them search for local natural items (e.g. a snail, a slug, a bug, a fern, several shapes of leaves, several types of local trees, common birds, clouds, dandelions, specially shaped rocks, etc. This does not have to be an alphabet list but just items in nature that children can find easily).
2. Set some guidelines with the students (E.g. do not select human-made things, do not pick live plants, leave things the way you found them, stay on trails to prevent erosion) and describe the physical boundaries for the activity (explain where the children can go: set out markers such as traffic cones or surveyor’s tape if needed to outline the area for safety; OR establish the rule that they must keep leaders in sight at all times).
3. Have the students head out on a neighbourhood scavenger hunt. Ask them to find as many things in nature beginning with each letter of the alphabet that they can, and list them in the boxes provided. Or, if using the picture list, put a check beside each picture that they find.
4. Once they have finished their search, make a master list that summarizes everything found under each letter. Then have the children work to categorize their lists into living and non-living things.
5. Discuss the lists as a group and how they came up with their category selections.

Did you know?

The European gypsy moth is native to Europe, and the larvae (caterpillars) feed on leaves of a wide range of hardwood and some softwood trees, which makes gypsy moth a forest pest of concern.





A	B	C	D
Acorn, Ant	Bark, Bee	Cone, Cloud	Dandelion, Daisy
E	F	G	H
Egg, Earthworm	Feather, Fern	Grass, Grasshopper	Holes in tree trunk, Hawk
I	J	K	L
Insect activity (e.g. holes, tunnels)	Jay	Key (a Maple “key” or winged seed)	Leaves, Lichen
M	N	O	P
Mushroom, Moss	Needle (evergreen), Nest	Oak tree, Owl	Puddle, Petal
Q	R	S	T
Question you have, Quiet spot	Rotting log, Root	Soil, Spider web	Trunk of a tree, Toadstool
U	V	W	X,Y,Z
“Umbrella” leaf	Vine, Variety of colours (list 6 different ones)	Wildlife (what kinds did you see?), Water	Experience Sounds (list 3 you heard!)