

Inquiry: What lives in my backyard?

Outdoor/Indoor Activity

Curriculum: Science, Literacy, Wellness



Incorporating essential questions into your lessons allows youth to be curious and to guide their learning. In this Inquiry, students explore the question, “What lives in my backyard?” Through outdoor exploration and research, students will create posters or a class magazine to share their knowledge.

Materials:

- Copies of [Biodiversity Bingo](#) Sheet
- Cameras

Instructions:

- **Optional warm up activity: Biodiversity Bingo.** Divide students into small working groups and hand out a copy of the [Biodiversity Bingo](#) sheet to each group. Head outside to a nearby natural area and challenge students to find a row, column or the whole sheet while taking a small walk (30 min).
- Celebrate student discoveries, highlighting the variety of wildlife and plants they found.

- After their warm up activity, introduce students to the Inquiry question, “What lives in my backyard?” Provide the following information:
 - Our backyard is home to many wild animals, plants, insects and other living things. What interesting living thing can you find that lives in our backyard?
 - Give students freedom to explore their “backyard”, a defined area within a local park or nearby natural area to find an interesting or unique animal, plant or insect. Ensure boundaries for their exploration are given.
 - Distribute cameras or provide assistance to support students taking a picture of their unique discovery.
 - In their journals, get students to list 3-5 things they would like to know about their discovery.
 - Back in the classroom, using resource books, your school library or the internet (if you have access to this) provide time for students to research their discovery. Support students in finding 3-5 pieces of information on their discovery, answering some of their questions.
 - Decide on the method for sharing student discoveries and information. Options include posters, a class magazine, other? Print student photos to support their visual creation.
 - Have students share their poster creation with each other. With student input, group the posters into categories based on similar characteristics. Talk about what each category has in common. Emphasize the diversity of categories and discoveries within each category, supporting student understanding on the biodiversity they found within their “backyard”.
 - Time for this Inquiry can be quick or can take more time pending depth of research and complexity of medium for information sharing.

Discussion:

Inquiry is a great process to build upon student’s natural curiosity. Through discovering a unique living thing in their backyard, researching it, and sharing their knowledge with others, students become young biologists celebrating the biodiversity of their local community.