

Rotting Log Scavenger Hunt

- I. Motivator: We are going to go on a scavenger hunt! This is a natural scavenger hunt – that means I did not have to come out here and hide anything because there are already tons of amazing things hiding in the woods for you to find! What kinds of things do you think we will find today?
 - a. Lead students to discussing what type of critters they will find the most of. They should be able to tell you that they will find lots of bugs, spiders, worms, etc (all invertebrates, although many will not know that word yet).
 - b. Introduce the word invertebrates: animals without backbones.
- II. Invertebrates
 - a. Animals without a backbone. Have students touch their backbones.
 - b. More species of invertebrates than any other type of animal in the world
 - c. No bones in their bodies. Ask students “how do they protect themselves?”
 - i. Some live inside shells (ex. mollusks, crabs)
 - ii. Hard exoskeletons (ex. insects, spiders)
 - iii. Live inside logs, trees, etc.
 - d. Why do we care about invertebrates: they are very important in terrestrial (land-based) food webs!
- III. Habitats- homes for organisms (plants and animals)
 - a. Ask students, “where should we look for invertebrates?”
 - b. Why do you think rotting logs are good habitat?
 - i. Home where animals can hide
 - ii. Plants get nutrients from the log
 - iii. Bigger animals can hunt the small animals hiding there!
- IV. Dead Log Scavenger Hunt worksheet
 - a. Pair up students or use chaperone groups, if already established
 - b. Pass out supplies - container, baggie, pencil, and clipboard with hunt worksheet. Have groups count the things they have- every group should have 4 things. Make sure they know they are responsible for bringing all 4 things back!
 - c. Work with students to complete the scavenger hunt worksheet
 - i. Invertebrates do not have **BONES**
 - ii. Introduce the distinction between invertebrates and insects. All insects are invertebrates, but invertebrates like spiders and worms are not insects. All insects have: **3 pairs of legs, 3 body sections (head, thorax, abdomen), and antennae.**
 - iii. Some other invertebrates we might find...: **spiders, worms, centipedes, sow bugs, etc.**
- V. Ground Rules
 - a. Define boundaries! Give chaperones assignments.
 - b. Set time to gather back at a specified location.
 - c. Handle critters gently. Put back where you found them, unless told to hang on to them to share with the class. Put logs and the ground back the way you found them.
- VI. Show and tell
 - a. Pick a place for students to sit or stand. Have pairs sit or stand together.
 - b. For a couple interesting items, choose one group to show their organism to the rest of the class by holding it out and walking past the rest of the group.
 - c. Return organisms to the wild