

# Schoolyard Safari

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## VITAL INFORMATION

Total Number of Students	25
Area(s) Students Live In	
Free/Reduced Lunch	
Ethnicity of Students	
English Language Learners	
Students with Special Needs	Five students with IEPs
Subject(s)	Science
Topic or Unit of Study	Life Science - Habitats and Ecosystems
Grade/Level	Grade 3
Comments	

## KEY CONCEPTS & STANDARDS

Big Idea & Essential Questions	The life and signs of life in a rural ecosystem - What kinds of animals live in our school's garden? What are their habitats like?
Learning Outcome(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Students will identify signs of animals living in the schoolyard - an example of a rural ecosystem.</li><li>- Students will describe ways the school environment provides suitable habitat for animals living there.</li></ul>
Summary	<p>Students will explore the habitats of animals and insects in the school garden. Using the Schoolyard Safari Survey sheet, students will identify these animals living in the school yard. They will also describe ways the school environment provides a suitable habitat for the animals living there.</p> <p>The school's garden will also be introduced as a <i>rural ecosystem</i>. We will then discuss ways on how we can describe a rural ecosystem.</p>
Standards	<p><b>CA- California K-12 Academic Content Standards</b></p> <p><b>Subject:</b> Science</p> <p><b>Grade:</b> Grade Three</p> <p><b>Area:</b> Life Sciences</p> <p><b>Sub-Strand 3:</b> Adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival. As a basis for understanding this concept:</p> <p><b>Standard b:</b> Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.</p>
Comments	

## ASSESSMENTS

Assessment/Rubrics	Students will record their information on a provided page.
Comments	

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Instructional Materials & Technology (handouts, etc.)	Schoolyard Safari Survey - student handout Clipboards Pencils Colored pencils (optional) Small hand lenses (optional)
Comments	

## IMPLEMENTATION

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**Sequence of Activities**

1. Ask students if they have heard of the word "safari" and what comes to mind when they hear that word. What are some things that you would find on a safari? Explain that safaris don't have to be at a faraway place but can also take place in your own backyard. What are some things that you would find on a backyard safari?
2. Tell students that they will be taking a safari of the school's garden. Explain that we are going to explore a *rural ecosystem*. They will be looking and listening for signs of animals living or visiting there. Students will need to search carefully to find animals or insects. Remind them they must be silent when searching outside as they will be more likely to find an animal if they are quiet. Ask students for ideas about where they might look. Some suggestions may be under the rocks by the plants, in the bushes, in between the blades of grass, or on the plants themselves. List these suggestions on the board as this can help stimulate students' imagination by having them pretend that buildings are mountains and cliffs, the grass area is the jungle, or that the sewer is an underground river.
3. Point out to students that in addition to actual animals, they should look and listen for signs of animals. Students must utilize more of their senses aside from their sight. Ask what kinds of signs they might find. Possibilities include insect-egg masses, bird nests, parts of a wasps' nest, spider webs, feathers, animal tracks, sounds of birds or insects, and leaves that have been nibbled on. This can be listed on the board too. They may record these signs onto their Schoolyard Safari Surveys.
4. Distribute clip boards and the Schoolyard Safari Survey student page. Have students quietly line up and take them up to the school's garden. Set boundaries to the school garden only. Allow at least 20 to 30 minutes for students to find animals or signs of animals. Ask students to take notes on their surveys. They may also draw sketches of the animals or signs they find.
5. Bring the class back together after giving them adequate amount of time to explore outside. Have students share their experiences in their table groups and compare their findings. Focus them on the following questions:
  - What animals did you observe living in our garden?
  - What evidence did you find of other animals?
  - What do these animals need to live? (food, water, air, shelter, and space)
  - What kinds of food might animals find on the school grounds?
  - Where do these animals get water?
  - What kind of shelter might animals find on the school grounds and garden?
  - Did you see any damage to the habitats or unhealthy conditions for plants, animals, or people? Were those conditions natural? (Or were they caused by humans or other animals?)Other questions to consider:
  - What were the largest and smallest animals you found?
  - How are those animals harmful or helpful to you?
6. After each table group has finished sharing and discussing, have at least one student representative from each table group share what their group has discussed. Collect Schoolyard Safari Surveys.

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**Grouping Strategies**

Table groups are pre-arranged. They are heterogeneous groups that have between 4 to 5 students in each group.

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**Differentiated Instruction**

Students will have the option to sketch or draw their findings onto their surveys. During the table group discussion, students are already arranged in mixed ability groups. Students with stronger skills can help lead discussions and have students with lower abilities contribute to the group's discussion by using the guiding questions.

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**Comments**

Lesson duration can go from 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes. This lesson may also be split in two days, where students explore the garden and collect data on the first day and discuss their findings on the second day.

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**REFLECTIONS**

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**Prior to Lesson**

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**Post-Lesson**

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**Comments**

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