

Animal Evidence

Getting ready

1. Evidence means clues that are left behind. By looking at evidence and thinking about it, we can make scientific guesses about things. Scientists who study animals and their evidence are called wildlife biologists.
2. You'll need a pencil and the Field Report on the next page. You'll need about 5 to 10 minutes to talk, 20 minutes outside for the activity, and 10 minutes afterward to go over your findings.

Directions

1. Brainstorm with the student what possible evidence animals might leave behind. He or she might list any of the following: Snake skins, antlers, pieces of fur, scat (droppings), webs, chewed leaves or sticks, footprints or tracks, shells, bones/skulls, feathers, remains of nuts (i.e. squirrels chewing on acorns or pecans), a den or nest, etc.
2. Explain that you will be collecting data, or information like the number and kinds of animal signs, in an organized, scientific way by looking at one certain area in a nearby park, schoolyard, or natural area.
3. Show the student the Field Report and talk about the animal evidence listed that he or she will be searching for.

Note: Depending on the level and ability of your student(s), as well as time available, you may wish to extend this activity to include critical thinking and science as inquiry. Student teams might each design or choose a few different habitat for comparison, or develop and write a question or hypothesis, or measure out specific areas (i.e. 10-meter squares), etc.

4. Direct the student to observe and identify evidence of animals they find, then record data on the Field Report.
5. Talk about what was found and what animals it might have come from or been left by. Ask questions like, "If we came back in a different season and did this again, do you think the results would be the same?" "If not, how do you think they would be different?"

Look at the Field Report for evidence that was NOT found at the study area. Analyze the study area and discuss why that evidence was not present (i.e. time of year, environmental factors, etc.)

As an extension, you may wish to have the student create a poster of the results by sketching pictures of evidence, taking digital pictures and printing them out, or collecting bits of evidence in plastic baggies and taping or gluing them on. Work with the student to classify (sort) findings according to the type of animal each piece of evidence came from (i.e. mammals, insects, birds, etc.). Which animal group produced the most evidence. *Please note that any evidence from birds, such as feathers or nests, are illegal to collect without a federal permit, and if discovered by conservation officer, can result in a fine*

Level 2

Standards met

1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.1.5,
3.1.3

Science Process skills

Measurement
Data collection
Recording
Reporting
Classification

Multiple Intelligences

Visual/spatial
Logical/mathematical
Interpersonal
Naturalist

You will need the Field Report which is on the next page.

Field Report

Animal Evidence

Name _____

Date _____ Location _____

Temperature _____ Weather _____

Name of sign	Number	Description, location
Ant hill		
Antler		
Chewed leaf		
Chewed nut		
Chewed stick		
Feather		
Fur		
Gnawed tree		
Hole in ground		
Nest		
Path		
Scat (droppings)		
Snakeskin		
Track		
Web		
Other		