



Bioblitz Skillbuilders: Learning and Applying the Skills of a Naturalist

Skillbuilder 1: Meet a Creature

Key Question

How can we use descriptive words and information to observe organisms?

Objective

Students will **interpret** and **draw** an organism based on another student's description.

Grades: 6-8

Time: 15 minutes

Location: Classroom

Materials

- Colored markers, paper
- Projector to display images OR printed images (attached)

Directions

- 1. Prepare set of images to either print and pass out to students or project in the classroom (see attached images)
- 2. Break students into pairs and instruct the pair to sit facing opposite directions. Pass out two pieces of paper and several markers to each pair.
- 3. Project, tape up or hand out the picture of a grasshopper.
- 4. Lead a short "guided imagery:" Students picture that they arrive on a planet where they find creatures they could never have imagined! One student will describe the "creature" (for example, the grasshopper) without using any words that give away the identity of the organism (grasshopper, bug, insect, etc). The other student, facing the opposite direction, will draw what his or her partner describes.
- 5. Ask artists to share their drawings with their partners. Ask class: what was successful and challenging between partners? How can observers improve their descriptions?
- 6. Students should switch roles and repeat one or more times with another organism of increasing difficulty (examples: rabbit, butterfly, jellyfish, pinecone, etc.)

Alternatives and Extensions

- Have one student observe the creature and describe to the whole class, instead of working in pairs.
- As an extension, have students draw and write a short written description of a few organisms in their backyards as a homework assignment.

Next Generation Science Standards

Performance Expectations

MS-LS4-1. Analyze and interpret data for patterns in the fossil record that document the existence, diversity, extinction, and change of life forms throughout the history of life on Earth under the assumption that natural laws operate today as in the past.

MS-LS4-2. Apply scientific ideas to construct an explanation for the anatomical similarities and differences among modern organisms and between modern and fossil organisms to infer evolutionary relationships.

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems: Science assumes that objects and events in natural systems occur in consistent patterns that are understandable through measurement and observation. (MS-LS4-1),(MS-LS4-2)

Science and Engineering Practices

- Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information





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