

1.5 Outdoor Study Stations— Performance Assessment










Action Synopsis

Students create stations with interpretive labels that teach others about signs of animals and what they eat.

One Session

1½ hours

IN & OUTDOORS

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Present a challenge to create study stations that show evidence of animals and what they eat. |  | <i>posing a challenge</i> |
| 2. Discuss criteria for high quality work. |  | <i>setting standards</i> |
| 3. Talk in groups about possible stations to create. |  | <i>planning</i> |
| 4. Locate places to create study stations outdoors. |  | <i>applying knowledge</i> |
| 5. Write station signs. |  | <i>communicating</i> |
| 6. Tour stations, and (optional) have another class tour them. |  | <i>assessing</i> |
| 7. Summarize and discuss experience. |  | <i>reflecting</i> |

Desired Outcomes

By the end of this assessment activity, students should:

- ✓ Be able to point out evidence of what animals live on the study site and what they eat.
- ✓ Be able to communicate their knowledge.

What You'll Need



For the class:

- field guides (see "Resource List," pages 52, 54)

For each group of 3–4 students:

- copy of "Challenge Sheet" (page 111)
- 3–4 5" x 7" index cards or pieces of oak tag
- 3–4 pieces of string or yarn to hang cards
- magic marker
- copy of the *Who Eats What* guide (pages 355–382)

For each student:

- copy of "Scoring Sheet" (page 112)
- copy of "Group Work Evaluation" (page 42)
- copy of "Reflections" (page 41)

Getting Ready

- ◆ Make logistical arrangements to revisit your study site.
- ◆ If possible, make arrangements for another class or outside guests to tour the study stations that your students create. Teaching a real audience what they've learned will motivate students to solidify and apply their knowledge.
- ◆ Try to get some volunteers to accompany you outside. Brief the volunteers on how to keep students on task while letting them make their own decisions about their work.
- ◆ Plan to use the same student groups as before, or decide on new groupings.

Action Narrative

Now that you're familiar with how to find evidence of animals and what they eat, you should be able to teach what you know to someone else. Here is your challenge.

Give a copy of the "Challenge Sheet" to each group and talk it over.

Have any of you been to a museum, zoo, botanic garden, or nature center where there are signs next to exhibits or along trails?

Discuss the style and purpose of these signs.

What things would make good stations for teaching about feeding interactions?

Stations could focus on small animals, signs of animals eating plants, or other animal signs (e.g., spider webs, nests, burrows, scrapings, holes, anthills). Even if the animal sign does not give direct evidence of feeding activities, students should write on their station cards information about that animal's food interactions.

If you've arranged for another class or other guests to tour the stations, tell students who their audience will be.

Your study stations will be evaluated using several criteria. What would you look for to decide how successful each study station is?

After students have shared their ideas, either formalize their suggestions into a scoring checklist, or give a copy of the "Scoring Sheet" to each student and go over the criteria.

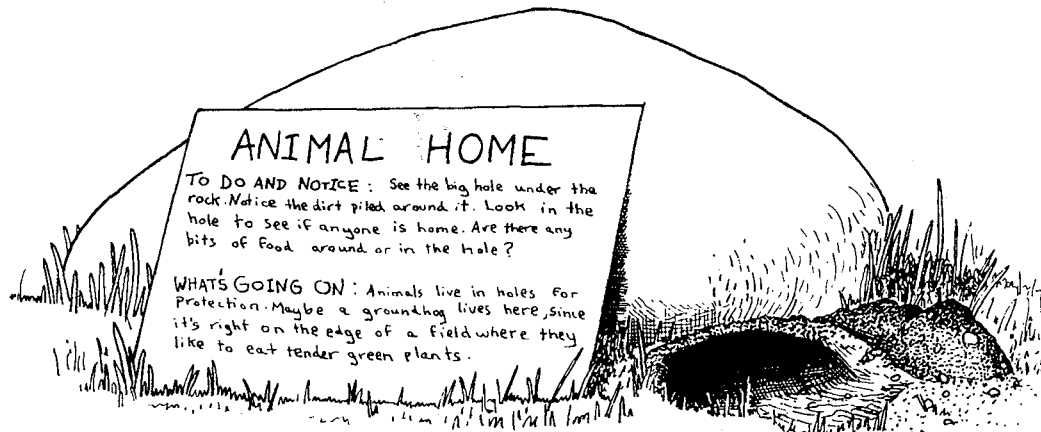
Take a few minutes to talk with your group members about three or four study stations you could create.

Give each group three or four index cards or pieces of oak tag, three or four pieces of string or yarn, and a magic marker. Remind students to bring their "Scoring Sheets" outside, as well.

When you arrive at the study site, gather students in a central meeting location and establish boundaries they are to stay within. Groups don't have to stay within their former study plots, but can wander throughout the area you designate.

Look for things you'd like to make into study stations, then make a sign for each one.

Students will need some time to explore and find small animals and food clues. After a while, help them to make a final decision on what to use as study stations, and to focus on creating signs. Remind students to include feeding information on their cards, since they sometimes get carried away with describing an animal sign and forget to mention how the sign gives clues about what the animal eats. Provide copies of the *Who Eats What* guide and other resources for students to use.



When all the signs are hanging or propped up in place, have students tour one another's study stations and/or show them to another class or invited guests. This is a good time for you to visit the stations and begin to fill out a "Scoring Sheet" for each group. Students can use their blank "Scoring Sheets" to evaluate their own and/or each other's stations. Collect the cards at the end of the session in order to complete the assessments later.



Back indoors, wrap up the activity by talking over questions such as:

How challenging was it to find animals and food clues this time as compared to the first time we visited our study site?

Where are good places to find small animals? Why?

Where are good places to find animal signs? Why?

What are some of the things you liked about other groups' stations and why?

What different kinds of feeding interactions did the stations point out?

Animals eating plants, animals eating animals, and animals drinking water are examples of feeding interactions.

Ongoing Assessment

Student Reflections

Have students fill out a copy of the "Group Work Evaluation" (page 42). They could also fill out a "Scoring Sheet" for their own study stations. This is also a good time to have them complete a "Reflections" sheet (page 41).

Teacher Reflections

As you assess the stations, think of yourself as a visitor wanting to learn how to "read" clues in nature to learn about what animals live in the area and what they eat. Putting yourself in the position of someone genuinely wanting to learn something from the station cards will help you determine rankings of High Quality, Meets Objective, or Falls Short, based on how successfully the cards engage and teach you. The most heavily weighted criteria on the "Scoring Sheet" are the two content items, since at this point students should be able to communicate correct information about what animals eat.

NAME(S) _____ DATE _____

OUTDOOR STUDY STATIONS

To increase people's enjoyment of the study site, our project sponsor would like us to create signs that point out animal signs and feeding interactions.

YOUR CHALLENGE:

Make 3 or 4 outdoor study stations that teach people about what animals eat. Choose interesting animals or animal signs to use as your stations. Make signs for people to read when they visit your stations. Each sign should have:

- ① A Title:
- ② A "To Do and Notice" section that helps people do and see something.
- ③ A "What's Going On" section that gives background information for people who want to learn more about what they are looking at.

RESOURCES:

You can use the *Who Eats What* guide and other resource books.

GOOD LUCK!

NAME(S) _____ DATE _____

OUTDOOR STUDY STATIONS

OBJECTIVES	POINTS				SCORE
	3 High Quality	2 Meets Objectives	1 Falls Short	0 Not Done	
CONTENT					
1. Stations point out what animals eat.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____ x 2 = ____
2. Information is correct.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____ x 2 = ____
SCOPE					
3. Group has a variety of stations.	_____	_____	_____	_____	= ____
4. Each sign includes facts and details.	_____	_____	_____	_____	= ____
COMMUNICATION					
5. Writing is easy to understand and captures interest.	_____	_____	_____	_____	= ____
COMMENTS:				FINAL SCORE: _____	
				Total Possible Score: 21	
				Overall Achievement:	
				18-21 High	
				14-17 Sound	
				8-13 Limited	
				0-7 Inadequate	