

Intro to Insects Lesson Plan

Grades: K - 4

Length of Program: 1 hour

Time of Year: Late spring, summer, early fall

Preferred Adult/ Student Ratio: 1/5

Summary:

Begin the program with a review of what makes an insect. Then with sampling nets in hand, your class will get the opportunity to catch insects around the marsh. By comparing their behaviors and adaptations, they will learn how these creatures survive as well as play an important role in the food chain.

Teacher Preparation:

Review the characteristics of an insect

Academic Standards Addressed:

Science

F.4.1 Discover how each organism meets its basic needs

F.4.3 Illustrate the different ways that organisms grow through life stages

Special Instructions:

Please make sure students are dressed appropriately.

Materials:

- Insect Sweep Nets
- Collection Sheets
- Bug Boxes
- Insect Field Guides
- Insect Metamorphosis Display

Procedure:

Review with the students the characteristics of an insect. Ask them what the term biodiversity means. Explain that you are going to take them on a biodiversity study in which they will look at the differences between insects that live in different habitats. Divide the students into groups of 4 - 5. Give each group a sweep net, bug box and collection sheet.

Take the students to a section of the prairie that has a lot of different kinds of plants in it. Explain that they will take turns catching insects with the sweep net. The first "sweeper" will go into the prairie and sweep the net through the vegetation 15 times as they walk in a line. After 15 sweeps, that person should close up the net and hand it to the 2nd "sweeper" who will also do 15 sweeps. They should continue this practice with the remaining students in their group. When they have all finished, they should take the net over to the rest of the group and slowly dump out the contents of their net onto the collection sheet to see what

they caught. Walk among the different groups, asking them to look for different colors, adaptations, etc. that the insects have.

After about 15 minutes, gather the group together and find out what their results are. Ask them what colors most of the insects were. Were there any insect types that showed up a lot more than others? For grades 3-4, show the students the metamorphosis display, explaining the two types of change insects can go through. Ask the students which of the different life stages they were able to find in their collections.

Take the students into the woods and repeat the process. After about 15 minutes, gather the group together and again go over the results. Ask them if they saw a difference in the types, numbers or, and colors of the insects. Why might this be?

Wrap-up:

Discuss biodiversity as it relates to other wildlife. Do other animals differ based on the habitat they are found in? What life changes do other animals go through as they grow up?