

Activity Two***Surviving Together: The Interconnectedness of Life***

All life is interconnected. To examine this, spend at least 15 minutes quietly observing life on a tree. Record your observations in a table like the one below.

Organisms Observed	Insects	Birds	Animals	Plants	Fungi
oak tree	ants beetles	robins sparrows	squirrels	kudzu vine poison ivy	bract fungus

What animals and insects live on the tree? What organisms visit the tree? How do the tree's inhabitants affect it? How does the tree affect the organisms that visit it?

Based on your observations, what inferences can you draw about the interconnectedness of life? What can you infer about how humans impact Earth's resources?

INVESTIGATION

1. Do you observe any ways in which humans have directly or indirectly influenced the tree or its inhabitants? For example, is there evidence that the tree has been pruned or treated with insecticides? Have birds used discarded paper to line their nests?

2. How do tree's inhabitants affect one another? For example, do squirrels eat seeds dropped by birds? Do birds feed on insects living in or on the tree?

3. Imagine that one organism was to disappear suddenly from the tree. How would the other organisms be affected?

4. What inferences can you draw about the interconnectedness of life?

Activity Three

Nature and the Artistic Impulse

The poet Joyce Kilmer wrote, "I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree." The beauty of the environment has prompted many artists to paint and many writers to write about the essence of the natural world.

MATERIALS

paper
pencil

PROCEDURE

Record your observations of nature in a poem.

1. Write a haiku. A haiku is a three-line poem that follows a set pattern. The first line of a haiku consists of five syllables; the second line has seven syllables; the last line has five. Try to capture a single natural image in your haiku.
2. Write an acrostic poem. In acrostic poetry, the first letter in each line spells out the name of something. An example is below.
Reaching
Inward
Vibrant
Energy
Rolling through the hills

GOING FURTHER

Combine your poems with others in your class to create a class poetry book on the environment. Donate a copy to your school library.