

# **Lesson – What Plants and Animals Use the Schoolyard Habitat?**

## **Preparing Students to Conduct a Field Study**

### **Objectives:**

Students will: 1) observe an outdoor area, 2) represent their observations using pictures, numbers, words, labeled diagrams, and 3) pose descriptive and comparative questions based on their observations.

### **Focus**

1. Write the investigative question on the board: “What plants and animals use the school yard habitat?” Discuss strategies for observing—using four of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell) and recording observations (drawing, using numbers, labeled diagrams writing). Hold up an object (e.g., pinecone, leaf, twig, rock) and ask students to describe its physical properties and characteristics. To prompt student thinking you might model drawing and/or writing observations as you ask:
  - What does it look like? (e.g., size, shape, color)
  - What does it feel like? (e.g. texture, temperature)
  - What does it smell like?
  - What does it sound like?

### **Explore**

2. Divide the class into pairs before going outside. Students spend multiple lesson sessions journaling observations. Students can record measurements. Below are sentence starters that will help students generate questions about the system.
  - I am curious about . . .
  - It surprised me that . . .
  - I wonder how this part effects another part of the system . . .
  - Questions I could investigate are . . .

Day 1: Overall Observations. Students record general observations and questions.

Day 2: Looking Up. Students look up (above eye level) and record observations and questions.

Day 3: Looking Down. Students look down (to the ground) and record observations and questions.

Day 4: Looking in the Middle. Students look at eye level and record observations and questions.

### **Reflect**

3. After each observation session ask students to share their findings and questions.