

15. Biodiversity of your local catchment

Lesson ideas

Go for a walk along a creek near your school or an area with native vegetation and ask students to use their powers of observation to monitor the biodiversity of the area.

- Look and listen for insects, birds, frogs, macroinvertebrates.
- Look at the different types of plants at the patch, look at the soil, gently lift up a log or some bark and see what is underneath (make sure to put it back carefully).
- Are there any patterns and shapes in nature? Are the birds in pairs or flocks? Are there any plants flowering? Is the creek flowing? How tall are the largest trees?
- Ask students to report back what they see and write down the answers.

An extension to this can be a blindfolding exercise whereby students must use their listening skills to monitor the biodiversity in the environment. Any human noises will be disruptive. It is better that children are seated several metres from each other. It will take at least 2 minutes for the brain to direct the ears to be more sensitive. After this point they may start to hear insects, birds, frogs, lizards running in the leaves.

After five minutes the students can report back on what they heard.

Topics for outdoor group discussion could include:

Who's eating whom? (relationships between birds, insects and plants)

What would the area have looked like prior to European settlement?

Who lived there?

What animals were there?

Were there any roads?

How would the Aborigines have moved through the area?

Since European Settlement:

What has changed?

What could we have done better to preserve and make this environment better?

What do these terms mean: Environmental weed, endangered, regeneration, responsibility?

What can we do in the future to help look after what is left in this area?

Following this walk, ask students to brainstorm a list of their local biodiversity to gauge improvement of their awareness of local biodiversity