

Succession

Real World Ecosystems
Activity
Grade Level: 5-8



Main Objectives

Once learners are acquainted with a variety of types of ecosystems and the general factors of which they are composed, both biotic and abiotic, this activity will provide the opportunity to predict what may happen should the conditions in an area change.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, learners will:

- Examine the effects of environmental disturbances
- Predict stages of succession in both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems

Length of Activity

1.5 hours

Materials List

Succession Backgrounder
Succession Learner Worksheet
Succession Learner Worksheet Answer Key

Procedure

Step 1: Backgrounder

- a. Provide the learners with copies of the Succession Backgrounder. Allow the class to read the backgrounder individually or in groups.
- b. As learners are finishing up their reading, be sure to remind them to discuss amongst themselves the “Think About” questions at the end of the backgrounder.

Step 2: Worksheet

- a. Provide the learners with the worksheet and have them answer the questions as a take-home assignment, or in class.
- b. Answers to the worksheet questions can be found in the answer key.

Tips and Extensions

- Encourage the learners to look around them for examples of where playgrounds, schoolyards, vacant lots, or sidewalks have changed markedly in the nature of their appearance and in the organisms that are found there. Ask them to think about small changes such as grasses growing through cracks in the pavement or between the side of the school and the sidewalk and what further changes might follow this.

Comprehension

When the learners have finished reading the backgrounder and completed the learner worksheet, ask them to think about succession in action. How might an increasing producer population affect the number and diversity of animal species in a wetland ecosystem?