

outdoor Citizen Scientist Learning

Choose where to begin your science journey!

Bio Blitz - for new scientists

A 'BioBlitz' is a concerted effort to discover and record as many living things as possible within a set location over a limited time period (usually 24 to 36 hours). The main scientific aim of a BioBlitz is to generate or extend biodiversity data at the chosen location. BioBlitzes cannot be complete biological surveys but they do create significant species lists and have facilitated the discovery of new species, the rediscovery of rare species and the identification of species where they are not usually found.

Through recording the names and locations of species, a BioBlitz can generate biological species' records that can be used to help scientific research as well as to inform conservation practice and policy, local planning and land management on a variety of scales.

Resources and Preparation:

- Prepare login account for iNaturalist.
- Digital cameras / tablets for taking photo observations.
- Clipboards, pencils.
- Rope to mark out the Blitz area for your student groups (1mx1m).
- Mark out the Blitz areas and consider how you will group your students.
- Optional tools to help (magnifying glasses).
- Consider inviting a local naturalist as a special expert guest for the activity.
- Consider working with an older buddy class to help support the students.

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Main activity:

- Head outside and explain to the students how they are going on a treasure hunt to look for living things – plants and animals.
- Break into smaller groups, and explain how each group will look in a designated BioBlitz location (marked out using rope in a 1mx1m area – could use skipping ropes to mark out)
 - Ask the students to look in the marked location and notice what it looks like
 - “Mission time” - let the students know its time to find as many treasures as they can, take photos of them
- At the end of the time, return for a class discussion

Discussion questions:

- Explain what a BioBlitz is – its like a treasure hunt to count and identify all the species in one area. It's when children (and adults) work together with Scientists to do important work together to find all the living things where you visit.
 - What sorts of plants did you find?
 - What animals did you find?
 - Can you count them?
 - How many species (different types) did you find?
 - Describe the site where you went on your treasure hunt?
 - What things help the animals and plants to live here?
 - What things might not help the animals and plants? Is it really shady or really dry?

Where to next?

Educator activities

- Save all observation photos into a folder saved as the date of the Blitz
- Log into iNaturalist and upload the photos as a batch export to save time
- Check back in to view data results
- Discuss the findings with the class (number of different species)

Student activities

- Use the photos to do some more detailed sketches of the species, frame them as a display in the classroom
- Use pre-prepared graph for students to tally the quantities of observations made
- Research one of the insects, animals or plant to learn more about it
- Learn the local Indigenous name for the insect, animal or plant.
- Use a microscope or magnifying glasses to look at one insect or leaf more closely
- Create an imaginary told story about one of the insects or animals found as a group
- Head outside and make bug hotels and new habitat for species
- Repeat the BioBlitz in a different season to compare observations
 - Create a “mission” to find a specific species or artefact I.e banksias, or seedpods

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Curriculum links:

Early Years Learning Framework

- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

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