

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Age/Grade Range

- Age 6 and up

Group Size

- Up to 30 students

Time

- Prep time: 15 minutes
- Set-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 1-1.5 hr

Materials

- Scavenger hunt checklists
- Clipboards
- Markers, pens, and pencils
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (optional)
- Baskets for collecting flowers/leaves (optional)

Set-Up

1. Pick a spot where you think you'll be able to find all the items on the list.
2. Print off scavenger hunt sheets.

Delivery Tips

- This activity can work at any time of year. Make your checklist for the season and location where the activity will take place.
- In the winter, pencils work best.

Activity Directions

3. Introduce the scavenger hunt. Talk about where you're going to be hiking and what things you might see. Have they been there before?



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Topics

- Ecology and Animals

Objective

- Get outside and use your senses to explore the natural world.





4. For young kids, make sure they know the safety rules and that they dress appropriately. A fun warm-up game is a good idea to get them excited and to let you get to know them a bit before taking them out on the trail.
5. Go out to the trail! Stay on the trail as much as possible and stick together. Encourage them to search around for the items on their list. Get them to try finding things by hearing, smelling, and touching, as well as seeing.
6. Keep an eye out for how the kids are doing. Keep in mind that on a linear trail, you'll have to go back the way you came. Adjust the time for this activity to suit the age of the students.
7. Return to the classroom and talk about what you all saw, smelled, heard, and touched.

Questions/Points of Discussion

- What was the coolest thing you found?

Modifications

- For younger kids, a treasure hunt may be more exciting for them. Leave clues for them to find along the trail, leading them to some hidden treasure or prize, like an Easter egg hunt but where you learn about trees and animals.
- For older kids, you can do a lot more, like photo scavenger hunts, bring binoculars and field guides, and make some trickier checklists. With binoculars, you could have them search for different types of ducks, or butterflies and dragonflies.
- For large groups and with multiple adult supervisors, you can split up the group into smaller groups and allow for more self-directed exploration. This will make sharing what the different groups found more interesting. Older kids will enjoy the competition.

Pairs Well With

- NatureWatch, and other citizen science activities.

Print Outs

Here are some example checklists you can download from nwtsciencefocus.ca/ecology-animals1.html:

- Fall Scavenger Hunt
- Summer Scavenger Hunt
- Winter Scavenger Hunt
- Winter Nature Walk Sense Checklist
- Winter Photo Scavenger Hunt
- Edible Plant Scavenger Hunt
- Nature Trail Treasure Hunt

