



Habitats



What is Ecology?

Do you like to read about plants and animals? Have you ever wondered where all the information about plants and animals comes from? Who collects all this information? Did you guess 'scientists?'

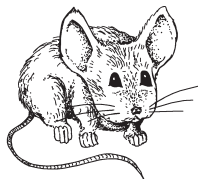
Scientists have been studying and collecting information about plants and animals for many years. There are many different types of scientists. An **ecologist** is a scientist who studies plants and animals as they are found in nature. Ecologists investigate the ways that plants and animals live together. The job of the ecologist is very important to keep our world healthy. As you learn about living things, perhaps you will understand why we should all be concerned with the study of plants and animals.

The reasons why plants and animals can be found living where they do is part of the science called **ecology**. The word ecology comes from two Greek words: **eco** comes from oikos which means house and **logy** comes from logos which means knowledge. Ecology is the study of the homes of plants and animals.

Many years ago, botanists (scientists who study plants) discovered that plants live in places to which they are suited. If a plant is placed in an area to which it is not suited it will probably die. For instance, a cactus would not grow well in the rain forest because the cactus needs hot sun and very little water. The cactus plant grows in the desert with other plants that are also suited to the heat and lack of rainfall. The desert has its own community of plants.

As botanists learned more and more, they found that plants are affected by the animals that live in the same area with the plants. They found that some plants do not grow well because they are eaten by animals before they are fully grown. Sometimes plants grow very well because they are not a source of food for animals. Other plants grow over large areas because the animals that share their space carry plant seeds far and wide. Botanists also found that animals are affected by the plants which grow in their community. Insects and animals live where the plants that they need for food grow. Some animals use plants, such as trees, for homes and protection.

Today, ecologists study communities of plants and animals and how they are linked together. They also study the effect humans have on plants and animals. When you have learned about how plants and animals survive, you will understand what humans can do to help preserve the many living things in our world.





Name: _____

What is Ecology?

Activity 1

Write these words in your vocabulary chart:

ecology
cactus

ecologist
scientist

investigate
community

botanist
source

suited
protection

Use the information card entitled 'What is Ecology?' to answer the following questions:

1. What is an ecologist?

2. A scientist who studies plants is called a _____.

3. In a paragraph, explain how the science of ecology began.

4. Why do you think the job of the ecologist is more important today than ever?



Name: _____

What is Ecology?

Activity 2

1. Using your dictionary, write the meaning of the word 'investigate.'

2. Desert or dessert? Which of these words is 'tastier' than the other? Explain.

3. What does the word '**community**' mean?

4. Name four animals and a plant that each animal depends on to help it survive.

Example:

Animal	Plant
koala	eucalyptus tree

5. An oak tree is a source of food and shelter for a squirrel. Think about your needs. List three needs and their source of supply for you.

Need	Source





Name: _____

What is Ecology?

What would you like to be?

An ecologist is a person who studies plants and animals in their natural environment. Match the different sciences with what is studied and the person who specializes in that science.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| A) meteorologist | a. meteorology | 1. _____ the study of the earth's crust |
| B) _____ | b. psychology | 2. _____ the study of numbers |
| C) _____ | c. seismology | 3. _____ the study of living things |
| D) _____ | d. technology | 4. _____ the study of science in industry |
| E) _____ | e. astronomy | 5. _____ the study of insects |
| F) _____ | f. geology | 6. _____ the study of earthquakes |
| G) _____ | g. numerology | 7. _____ the study of the mind |
| H) _____ | h. biology | 8. _____ the study of weather |
| I) _____ | i. ornithology | 9. _____ the study of stars and planets |
| J) _____ | j. ichthyology | 10. _____ the study of volcanoes |
| K) _____ | k. paleontology | 11. _____ the study of fossils |
| L) _____ | l. anthropology | 12. _____ the study of cosmetics |
| M) _____ | m. volcanology | 13. _____ the study of man |
| N) _____ | n. cosmetology | 14. _____ the study of fish |
| O) _____ | o. entomology | 15. _____ the study of birds |



What is Ecology?

'E' is for Ecology!

There are many words associated with the study of ecology that begin with the letter 'e.' How many 'e' words can you find? Read the clues carefully.

1. everything around us _ _ _ _ _
2. the third planet from the sun _ _ _ _ _
3. a person who studies plants and animals _ _ _ _ _
4. a process in the water cycle _ _ _ _ _
5. a species that needs protection _ _ _ _ _
6. a living thing needs this to live _ _ _ _ _
7. a species that no longer exists _ _ _ _ _
8. a process which wears away the earth _ _ _ _ _
9. a large community of living things _ _ _ _ _
10. a coniferous tree _ _ _ _ _

Find the words that fit the blank spaces above in this wordsearch puzzle.

