

Observation Station

Overview

Ethology is the study of natural animal behavior. Scientists use this method as a way to understand animal behavior as it relates to adaptive strategies, reproductive strategies, and energy requirements.

Episode Connection: Habitat, Food Chains, Scientific Method

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe typical activities an animal does during the day;
- Describe the amount of time the animal does these activities;
- Describe how the animals use areas as a habitat.

Time Required: 2-3 class periods

Materials

- Observation Station Worksheet
- Writing Utensils
- Watch
- Digital cameras (optional)
- Computer (optional)

Procedure

1. Separate the students into groups of 2-3, depending on class size. The groups will observe a habitat and animals in your area and record what they observe. Student groups will create short presentations to present to the rest of the class.
 - Note: It may be fun for the class to observe animals at a local zoo, nature center or aquarium.
2. During class period 1, allow the students to record their observations for at least 30 minutes.
 - Note: You can also assign the observation portion as homework if your class time is limited.
3. During class period 2, allow the students to compile and discuss their observations in preparation for class presentations. You may want to allow some time for research and presentation prep for students to create display boards or computer presentations.
4. Class period 3: Student Ethology Presentations.
 - Each group should include this criteria during their presentation:
 - Title and Name(s)
 - Date, time and place of observation
 - Pictures and/or video of your observation area/ focal animal
 - Answers to the Report Questions



Science Minutes - 1, Food Chains, 2, Habitats & 9, Research

Go Further

Encourage the students to can make graphs depicting the percentage of time an animal spent doing various behaviors. They can use the graphs in their final presentations.

Standards Addressed

Coming soon....

Observation Station

Name(s): _____

Ethology is the study of natural animal behavior. Scientists use this method as a way to understand animal behavior as it relates to adaptive strategies, reproductive strategies, and energy requirements. An ethogram is a catalog or inventory of all behaviors or actions exhibited by an animal used in the study of ethology.

Using the charts provided, fill in the information while you observe a habitat and its residents. Focus on a particular animal in that habitat to complete the ethogram data. Taking pictures and video of the observed habitat and focal animal will be useful for your final presentation.

Vital Information

Location:		
Date and Time:		
Habitat Description:		
Animal(s) Observed:		
Weather Conditions:		
Start / End Time:	Start:	End:
Total Observation Time:		

Ethogram

Animal Observing: _____

Time	Behavior	Additional Information

Other interesting observations:

Using your collected data, calculate the percentage of time the focal animal spent on each behavior:

Behavior	Total Time Spent	Percentage of Total Time

Using the data you have collected, you will present your findings to the class. Make sure to include some pictures and/or video of your habitat and focal animal you observed as well as the answers to the following questions.

1. Which activities did your animal do
 - a. For the longest period of time?
 - b. Most frequently?
 - c. Least frequently?



Science Minutes - 1, Food Chains, 2, Habitats & 9, Research

2. What did you notice when you were trying to classify behavioral activities into broad categories?
3. Why do you think you should collect data at
 - d. The same time of day?
 - e. The same time of the year?
4. How do you think your animal's activity would change if the weather were different?
5. How does your animal use this area as a habitat? (What does it do while it is there?)
6. Discuss how you think that a change in the habitat can affect the survival of your organism and/or its entire species?

Include other information that you consider interesting and important.