

# Micro Hiking: The Best Way to Explore Tiny Ecosystems

Check out the Powerpoint for a lesson on ecosystems and the natural energy cycle

## What is an ecosystem?

- All the living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) things interacting with each other in an area.

## What is a micro hike?

- It is a way to explore a tiny space that holds an entire ecosystem that is right under your nose.
- You can choose to take your micro hike in your backyard or pretty much anywhere else that is outdoors and natural.
- Pick a safe spot and make sure your family knows where you will be.
- Your area should be roughly one meter long and one meter wide.

## Prepare for your hike:

- Make some predictions about what you will see on your hike.
- What kinds of biotic or living things will you see?
- What kinds of abiotic or nonliving factors will you see?
- Do you think you will see any producers, consumers or decomposers? What types?
- Write down your predictions.
- Invite your friends and families to join you!

## What to bring:

- One string that is about 1 to 2 meters in length. You will use this to create the path you will take. You can arrange it however you like within your space.
- Some paper and a writing utensil.
- One magnifying glass (optional).
- Take photographs or make sketches of the different things you see.

## Let the hiking begin!

- Place your string on the ground and get very close to your space so that you can easily see all that is going on. Follow your string path through this space.
- Try to see all the details by moving grass and other things out of way so that you can see everything clearly.
- On your paper make three columns. One titled animals, one terrain, and one plants. Write down the different things you see in those columns.
- On your piece of paper take notes of the different biotic and abiotic things you see.
- Can you identify the different consumers and producers you see?
- How do the different factors in this ecosystem affect each other?
- Try to identify the different species of plants or animals or insects that you observed.

Some resources that may be helpful during your hike. Feel free to print them out or to make your own.



## Observation Page

- Can you identify the different producers, consumers, and decomposers you see?
  
- How do the different factors in this ecosystem affect each other?
  
- Other observations?
  
- Try to identify the different species of plants or animals or insects that you observed.

Animals (Biotic)	Terrain (Abiotic)	Plants (Biotic)

## Sketch Pad

Make any sketches of the different plants and animals you see during your micro hike.

Take brief notes, draw sketches and take pictures.

We can all talk about our experiences and show some of the observations we made during our micro hikes at our next weekly lesson on Tuesday, July 7th at 4:00pm.