

Name: _____

Evaluate: Ecosystems, Habitats, and Niches

THE ACTIVITY

1. Choose a living organism. An animal is the easiest, but you may choose a plant, fungus, or other living organism. Write the name of your animal in your journal.
2. Make up a collective noun for your animal and write this in your journal. This should not be a real collective noun that already exists for your animal. Be creative; have fun with this. Your teacher will give you some examples of both real collective nouns and creative ones as well.
3. Research your animal online. Find out about its niche and habitat. Find out what other organisms (and abiotic factors as well) can be found in the your animal's ecosystem.
4. Make a "business card" for your animal. The card should include what your animal is, your animal's "job" (its niche) and the address it can be found at (its habitat). The card should be centered (left to right) and take up about half the page in that direction. The card should take up about a third of the page in the vertical direction. Your teacher will show some examples of sample business cards. Bonus points may be awarded for exceptional business cards.
5. On the right hand facing page, using colored pencils, fill the entire page with your animal and its habitat. After you've finished the organism and habitat, be sure to fill in some of the other biotic and abiotic factors found in your organism's ecosystem.

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

1. What is an ecological "niche"?
2. List factors that should be included when defining the term "niche".
3. Describe what happens if two species have overlapping niches?
4. Describe two possible outcomes if a new species is introduced to an area and its niche heavily overlaps the niche of an existing organism in that area?
5. If the niche of an introduced species only partly overlaps the niche of a native species, could that still have an effect on the native species? Give an example to help explain your answer.
6. Describe two examples of cases where niches partially overlap, but competition is minimized.
7. Can there be competition within a species as well as between species? Explain or give examples.