



## Ecosystems - Grades 3-5

**Objective:** The goal of this activity is to introduce the ecosystem concept, the components of an ecosystem and to discuss the importance of ecosystems to life in general and to humans in particular. Students will create a small ecosystem using simple materials found in the home.

**Materials** (provided by CSM): Pond water, microscopes, glass slides, pipets, plastic bottles, seedlings, crickets, pebbles, activated charcoal, moss, potting soil, organic matter (leaves), spray bottles, plastic gloves, plastic spoons, observation packet.

Observation [Packet](#)

Ecosystem [Worksheet](#)

**Discussion:**

- What is an ecosystem?
- What do living things need to stay alive?
- What is a consumer (heterotrophs)? What is a producer (autotrophs)?
- What are omnivores, herbivores, and carnivores?
- What are scavengers and decomposers?
- Can you find these in the ecosystem you that you made?
- Can you identify the living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) parts of your ecosystem?

**Activity description:**

Students will observe microscopic organisms in pond water. Students will each create an ecosystem in a bottle that can be observed over time. Students will use the observation packet to practice applying the scientific method and create a food web for their ecosystem.