

# iNaturalist Companion

Use this to expand on observations captured with the iNaturalist app!



## Key Terms

Biodiversity- the variety of life in the world or a particular habitat or ecosystem

Ecosystem- a biological community of interacting organisms and their surrounding environment

Observation- the action or process used to watch something or someone carefully in order to gain information

Organism- an individual, plant, or single-celled life form

## Background

iNaturalist is a free app used to track nature observations (available for Apple + Android devices). These observations can be made in your backyard, a public greenspace, or anywhere that organisms are located - which is all around us! Getting a closer look at what is around us is important because we can better understand ecosystems that surround us and better assess biodiversity. Ecosystems with a wide array of biodiversity are a positive sign that the land is healthy and able to support wildlife. Scientists can analyze data we collect to learn how the environment is doing and come up with solutions that aid in protecting organisms. Through surveying organisms big or small, we can connect with nature and aid in providing valuable information!

<https://www.inaturalist.org>

## Pre-Activity Guiding Questions

1. How many different types of observations do you think you will have? What do you think you will see more of - plants or animals? Why?
2. Why are classifications and scientific names important? How do we use them?
3. What key factors make our observations useful? What do we have to look for when we are logging? Which senses do we use?

## Directions

Spend 30 minutes-1 hour outside in a greenspace collecting observations on the app. Observations can include plants or animals, so as long as you are outside there is plenty to log! It's important that we log native plants and wildlife versus anything that is cultivated. Cultivated means planted by humans. Make sure to be aware of your surroundings while logging. Only touch things (e.g. flipping over a log to look for insects) if it is safe to do so. Bring along a notepad and pencil to write additional notes you have or to sketch your own drawings!

# iNaturalist Companion



## Post-Activity Guiding Questions

1. What are the similarities between your observations? The differences?
2. What relationships did your observations have with one another?
3. Would you have the same observations in a different season? Why or why not?
4. The four basic needs are water, space, shelter, and food. How did the organisms you viewed obtain theirs? Are they individually able to provide for themselves? Think of three different predator/prey relationships that exist in the space you chose to observe, based on your data.
5. Did you learn about a species that you did not previously know about? What other questions do you have about this species? Do research to answer questions you may have and learn more about how this organism survives!
6. Do you think that the time of day has an effect on what you observed? Why or why not?
7. What other ways has technology helped us learn about nature? If you could invent any science tool using technology, what would it be?