

A LOG'S LIFE

Objective: Students will describe the process of decomposition and identify some of the organisms that live in, on and under fallen logs and explain how those organisms depend on the dead wood for survival.

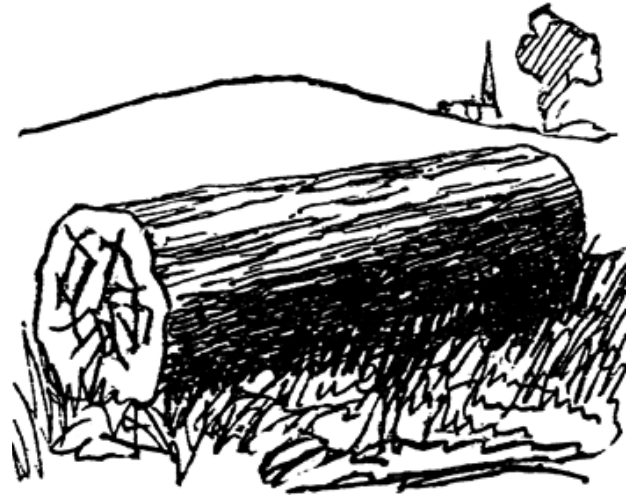
Illinois State Goals: 12.A., 12.B., 12.E.

Top Book Hits:

A Log's Life by Wendy Pfeffer;

ISBN-13: 978-1416934837

What's Under the Log? (Hidden Life) by Anne Hunter; **ISBN-13:** 978-0395754962



Materials Needed:

- Containers with lids for collection of bugs and/or plant matter
- Paper and pencil
- Field guides on insects and fungi
- Magnifying glasses
- Log's Life Chart

Procedure:

1. Ask the students why forests aren't piled high with fallen trees, branches, and leaves. What happens to trees after they die? Tell the students that they are going to examine dead logs to find out the answers.
2. Divide the group into teams of three or four and explain that each examine a rotting log. Each group will fill out the "A Log's Life Chart".
3. Take the students outside and have each group pick a log to study.
4. Once the students have finished the activity, be sure they put the log back in place so the habitat is not totally disturbed.

Give credit where credit is due...adapted from Project Learning Tree - The Fallen Log Lesson.

A Log's Life

Is there bark on the log? What does it look like?	
What kinds of plants are growing on the log?	
What kinds of insects or animals do you see? (Be sure to look inside and under the log)	
What are the insects or animals doing?	
What do you think the insects or animals eat?	
Do you see any insect holes, spider webs, or other evidence that an animal has been there?	
Why do you think the tree died? (Look for other parts of the tree nearby to help you answer this question.)	
Has the tree been dead a long or short time? What makes you think that?	
Draw two of the insects or animals that you see.	
Draw something you find interesting on your log.	
Draw two plants that you see on your log.	