

Macroinvertebrate Simon Says - Bugs Don't Bug Me

Summary

After a short introduction to macroinvertebrate feeding habits, students will play a Simon Says game.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 30 minutes each

Materials

None needed; however, pictures of the macroinvertebrates can be helpful (see Appendix B or <http://www.extension.usu.edu/waterquality>).

Background for Teachers

PURPOSE:

To introduce students to the feeding adaptations found in aquatic macroinvertebrates.

BACKGROUND:

The macroinvertebrates we will cover can be classified into four groups, called functional feeding groups, depending on their feeding habits. They are shredders, collectors, scrapers (or grazers), and predators.

Shredders are those organisms that chew on intact or large pieces of material. Leaves, needles, flowers, and twigs that fall from trees and shrubs on the shore into the water are the most common food for shredders.

Collectors acquire and ingest very small particles of organic matter. They eat the organic matter suspended in the water by catching it with net-like features or other adaptations. Often they eat fine organic matter that has fallen out of suspension onto the streambed (substrate).

Scrapers (also called grazers) remove and eat the algae growing on rocks in shallow water.

Predators are organisms that prey on other organisms. They have special mouthparts called mandibles which they use to pierce prey and hold it while they eat.

Instructional Procedures

PROCEDURE:

Divide the students into six groups: Dragonflies, Craneflies, Blackflies, Mayflies, Stoneflies, and Caddisflies.

Explain the different feeding habits of each group, and assign them an action.

DRAGONFLIES are predators. They have long mouthparts that extend and unfold to catch prey. For their action, have the students put their hands to their mouths with their elbows tucked down in front of them. To mimic eating, have the students straighten their elbows and make an upward scooping action. Students can also hold hands out with one up high and one down low and clap them together in a large "chomping" motion.

CRANEFLIES are collectors. They wiggle around until they find a place to feed. The action should be a wiggly walk.

BLACKFLIES are also collectors, but they collect with a large net-like feature on their head, which they use to gather food. They can lower it down to their mouths to eat. The action should be placing your hands above your head, and lowering them down to your mouth.

STONEFLIES are shredders. They wait for leaves or other debris to fall into the water and then they tear off small pieces to eat. The action should be similar to tearing up a piece of paper.

CADDISFLIES AND MAYFLIES are scrapers. They scrape algae off rocks and sticks. This

action should be similar to scratching someone's back.

After groups have learned their actions, have them act out their part at the same time for one minute.

Then test the students on all of the feeding habits by playing "Simon Says" with the actions. (Example: Simon says act like a blackfly. Everyone should have their hands above their head.)

Extensions

Now that students have been introduced to aquatic macroinvertebrates, follow this lesson with Macroinvertebrate Mix and Match to introduce their body parts and life cycles.

Bibliography

This lesson plan was developed by the Utah State University Water Quality Extension.

Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)