One Foot Hike

Usually when we observe nature we look for the big things: trees, animals, flowers, etc. It is easy to forget about the small stuff: bugs, grass, and even dirt! A One Foot Hike will help us work on our observation skills and appreciate the small things in nature that we sometimes don't see.

Key Terms

Observation- the action or process of viewing something intently, often with the specific purpose of gathering information
Biotic factors- living things in an ecosystem
Abiotic factors- non-living things in an ecosystem

Material

Ruler
Hand lens
Observation Log (provided)
Pencil

Procedure

1. Bring your materials out into your yard or local park. Place your ruler on the ground in a spot that you want to learn more about.
2. Take a hike along the ruler- but only in that one foot space! Be sure to look on both sides, and use your hand lens to get a closer look!
3. Write down your observations in the log provided, including anything you find! Where did you find it? Is this a biotic component of the ecosystem, or an abiotic component?
4. Once you've learned everything you can about one location, move your ruler to another spot! Explore at least three locations in your yard or local park.
5. Compare your observations from each site.

Guiding Questions

1. How did you know if something you found was a biotic or abiotic factor? How did you decide if it was living or non living?
2. Think about your five senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste) and how they relate to your observations. Consider the senses of life forms that you observe.

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3. All living organisms (big or small!) have four basic needs: water, space, shelter, and food. How do humans obtain their basic needs? How do the biotic factors you observed obtain their basic needs?

Extension

Choose one of the sites you explored, and draw it in the space below. Make sure you include all of the biotic and abiotic factors you observed.