

# Field Ecology

## *Correlation to Core Curriculum*

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Standards listed are not covered exhaustively, but in varying degrees.

### Strand K.2: LIVING THINGS ANF THEIR SURROUNDINGS

Living things (plants and animals, including humans) depend on their surroundings to get what they need, including food, water, shelter, and a favorable temperature. The characteristics of surroundings influence where living things are naturally found. Plants and animals affect and respond to their surroundings.

#### Standard K.2.3

Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about how living things (plants and animals, including humans) affect their surroundings to survive. Examples could include squirrels digging in the ground to hide their food, plant roots breaking concrete, or humans building shelters. (ESS2.E)

#### Standard K.2.4

Design and communicate a solution to address the effects that living things (plants and animals, including humans) experience while trying to survive in their surroundings. Define the problem by asking questions and gathering information, convey designs through sketches, drawings, or physical models, and compare designs. Emphasize students working from a plant, animal, or human perspective. Examples could include a plant growing to get more sunlight, a beaver building a dam, or humans caring for the Earth by reusing and recycling natural resources. (ESS3.C, ETS1.A, ETS1.B, ETS1.C)

### Strand 1.2: THE NEEDS OF LIVING THINGS AND THEIR OFFSPRING

Living things (plants and animals, including humans) depend on their surroundings to get what they need, including food, water, shelter, and a favorable temperature. Plants and animals have external features that allow them to survive in a variety of environments. Young plants and animals are

similar but not exactly like their parents. In many kinds of animals, parents and offspring engage in behaviors that help the offspring to survive.

#### Standard 1.2.2

Construct an explanation by observing patterns of external features of living things that survive in different locations. Emphasize how plants and nonhuman animals, found in specific surroundings, share similar physical characteristics. Examples could include that plants living in dry areas are more likely to have thick outer coatings that hold in water, animals living in cold locations have longer and thicker fur, or most desert animals are awake at night. (LS1.A, LS1.D)

#### Standard 1.2.3

Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the patterns of plants and nonhuman animals that are alike, but not exactly like, their parents. An example could include that most carrots are orange and shaped like a cone but may be different sizes or have differing tastes. (LS3.A, LS3.B)

### Strand 2.2: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS

Living things (plants and animals, including humans) need water, air, and resources from the land to survive and live in habitats that provide these necessities. The physical characteristics of plants and animals reflect the habitat in which they live. Animals also have modified behaviors that help them survive, grow, and meet their needs. Humans sometimes mimic plant and animal adaptations to survive in their environment.

#### Standard 2.2.2

Plan and carry out an investigation of the structure and function of plant and animal parts in different habitats. Emphasize how different plants and animals have different structures to survive in their habitat. Examples could include the shallow roots of a cactus in the desert or the seasonal changes in the fur coat of a wolf. (LS1.A, LS4.C, LS4.D)

#### Standard 2.2.3

Develop and use a model that mimics the function of an animal dispersing seeds or pollinating plants. Examples could include plants that have seeds with hooks or barbs that attach themselves to animal fur, feathers, or human

clothing, or dispersal through the wind, or consumption of fruit and the disposal of the pits or seeds. (LS2.A)

### Strand 3.2: EFFECTS OF TRAITS ON SURVIVAL

Organisms (plants and animals, including humans) have unique and diverse life cycles, but they all follow a pattern of birth, growth, reproduction, and death. Different organisms vary in how they look and function because they have different inherited traits. An organism's traits are inherited from its parents and can be influenced by the environment. Variations in traits between individuals in a population may provide advantages in surviving and reproducing in particular environments. When the environment changes, some organisms have traits that allow them to survive, some move to new locations, and some do not survive. Humans can design solutions to reduce the impact of environmental changes on organisms.

#### Standard 3.2.2

Analyze and interpret data to identify patterns of traits that plants and animals have inherited from parents. Emphasize the similarities and differences in traits between parent organisms and offspring and variation of traits in groups of similar organisms. (LS3.A, LS3.B)

#### Standard 3.2.4

Construct an explanation showing how variations in traits and behaviors can affect the ability of an individual to survive and reproduce. Examples of traits could include large thorns protecting a plant from being eaten or strong smelling flowers to attracting certain pollinators. Examples of behaviors could include animals living in groups for protection or migrating to find more food. (LS2.D, LS4.B)

### Strand 4.1: ORGANISMS FUNCTIONING IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Through the study of organisms, inferences can be made about environments both past and present. Plants and animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions for growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction. Animals use different sense receptors specialized for particular kinds of information to understand and respond to their environment. Some kinds of plants and animals that once lived on Earth can no longer be found. However, fossils from these organisms provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago and the nature of their

environments. Additionally, the presence and location of certain fossil types indicate changes that have occurred in environments over time.

#### Standard 4.1.1

Construct an explanation from evidence that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. Emphasize how structures support an organism's survival in its environment and how internal and external structures of plants and animals vary within the same and across multiple Utah environments. Examples of structures could include thorns on a stem to prevent predation or gills on a fish to allow it to breathe underwater. (LS1.A)

#### Standard 4.1.2

Develop and use a model of a system to describe how animals receive different types of information from their environment through their senses, process the information in their brain, and respond to the information. Emphasize how animals are able to use their perceptions and memories to guide their actions. Examples could include models that explain how animals sense and then respond to different aspects of their environment such as sounds, temperature, or smell. (LS1.D)

### Strand 5.3: CYCLING OF MATTER IN ECOSYSTEMS

Matter cycles within ecosystems and can be traced from organism to organism. Plants use energy from the Sun to change air and water into matter needed for growth. Animals and decomposers consume matter for their life functions, continuing the cycling of matter. Human behavior can affect the cycling of matter. Scientists and engineers design solutions to conserve Earth's environments and resources.

#### Standard 5.3.3

Develop and use a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment. Emphasize that matter cycles between the air and soil and among plants, animals, and microbes as these organisms live and die. Examples could include simple food chains from ecosystems such as deserts or oceans or diagrams of decomposers returning matter to the environment. Complex interactions in a food web will be taught in Grades 6 through 8. (LS2.A, LS2.B)

## Strand 6.4: STABILITY AND CHANGE IN ECOSYSTEMS

The study of ecosystems includes the interaction of organisms with each other and with the physical environment. Consistent interactions occur within and between species in various ecosystems as organisms obtain resources, change the environment, and are affected by the environment. This influences the flow of energy through an ecosystem, resulting in system variations. Additionally, ecosystems benefit humans through processes and resources, such as the production of food, water and air purification, and recreation opportunities. Scientists and engineers investigate interactions among organisms and evaluate design solutions to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem resources.

### Standard 6.4.3

Develop a model to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem. Emphasize food webs and the role of producers, consumers, and decomposers in various ecosystems. Examples could include Utah ecosystems such as mountains, Great Salt Lake, wetlands, or deserts. (LS2.B)