

Pond Ecology

Water Writers

Post-visit activity, grades 4+

Adapted from Instructor, "Trace Water to its Source," 1993, Lynne Kepler

Objective

Students will write to other schools and students living along a common waterway, sharing observations about the vegetation and animals near the river, the health and future of the river, and things they can do to study the river water (pH, speed of flow, etc.).

Materials

- Computer
- Camera or mobile phone
- Notebook and pen or pencil

Procedure

1. Using a map, computer, or mobile device, have students identify a river or large stream near the school. Trace the waterway to its source (where it begins). The class should create a list of other towns and cities along the river's course, then choose a city and school with which to correspond.
2. Conduct a field trip to the river site. Encourage the students to make observations, take notes, draw and/or photograph the area. Your site could also inspire poetry, short stories, artwork, etc. Any notes and photographs will be sent to the school your class has chosen to contact.

3. As a class, discuss what information to send to the other school class. Draft a letter or email with the purpose of contacting and exchanging information with this other class about the waterway. Describe it in your area and ask questions about what it looks like in their area. For example:

What does the stream look like in your area?

Is it wider or narrower? (Be sure to describe it in your area)

What type of vegetation grows along the bank?

Are there many animals living near the river?

Are there industries alongside the river?

Does the water seem to be clean where you are?