
What is It?

Level

4-8+

Key question

Can I describe a species without referring to colour, size or precise location?

Key outcome

Use characteristics of animals and plants to describe them in their habitats.

Adapted from Dr Gee Chapman, University of Sydney.

This is a short introductory activity to attract the attention of students before commencing a detailed study of the platform.

What you need

A rocky shore

What you do

Work in pairs and spread out across the rock platform. Look around you.

Each of you finds an animal or plant on the rock or in a pool. One of you has to describe the specimen without showing the other what it is. You may not refer to colour, size or precise habitat, as these may vary as the specimen grows older.

You may refer to up to five parameters: shape, whether it has a lid or 'door', presence or absence of hard shell, whether in or out of water, presence of holes.

Once you have described your specimen, can your partner guess what it is. And where it will be found.

Swap over and try with the other partner.

Consider these questions

Is it difficult to describe something on the rock platform if you can't use characteristics associated with colour or size?

- Where did most of your species live?
- Were most of the items described animals or plants?
- Could you identify anything that would change markedly as it grew older?

Now, proceed with a rock platform study, transect, or one of the field methods described.