Life Sciences 11
Observations Assignment

Objective:

In this assignment, you will practice the essential skill of making detailed scientific observations. Observation is a cornerstone of biology, it allows scientists to notice patterns, ask meaningful questions, and build explanations about the living world. Careful and accurate observation is the first step in the scientific method and is critical to developing scientific understanding.

In Life Sciences 11, observations help connect course concepts to the real world, encouraging you to explore living organisms and their interactions in meaningful ways. By observing closely and recording details with precision, you will strengthen your ability to recognize structures, behaviors, and relationships in nature. You will use these skills throughout this course including the dissections we will complete during the year.

The purpose of this assignment is not only to document what you see, but also to develop curiosity, ask deeper questions, and begin thinking like a biologist. By completing this activity, you will practice the critical scientific skill of noticing and recording detailed observations. You will choose an animal (preferably in nature, but a pet or online videos are acceptable) and document your observations in detail.

General Guidelines for Documenting Observations

- Always note when and where you are observing.
- Use specific, descriptive language and adjectives.
- Observe with sight, smell, hearing, and (if safe and appropriate) touch.
- Record both the 'big picture' and the details. Consider changing your viewpoint or focus.

Observation Methods

- Photographs or short videos
- Journal-style notes
- Drawings or sketches
- 2D or 3D models (arts and crafts)
- Collecting safe, non-living samples (e.g., fallen leaves, shells, fur)
- Audio recordings of sounds
- Short documentary-style video clips

Possible Observation Subjects

- Specimens:
  - A family pet
  - A growing plant
  - Shedding from living things (leaves, shells, fur, feathers, snakeskin)
- Environments:
  - A local park
  - Your backyard
  - A nearby trail or pond
- If direct observation isn't possible:
  - Use online videos (e.g., raccoons foraging, birds nesting, or fish swimming)

Your Task

Part A – Planning

1. What organism or environment will you observe?

- Location: _____

- Organism(s): _____

- Date & Time: _____

2. Why did you choose this subject? (Personal interest, curiosity, availability, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part B – Observation Journal

On a separate paper, make **at least 3 separate observation entries.** Each should include:

1. Date & Time: _____
2. Location: _____
3. Weather/Conditions (if outside): _____
4. Observations – refer to the "Observation Methods" above, use a different method for each observation (use all senses, be descriptive. Remember to attach photos or sketches if applicable):

Part C – Reflection & Curiosity – Now that you have completed 3 observations, answer the following questions:

1. What stood out the most in your observations?

2. Did you notice any patterns of behavior or interactions?

3. Was there anything that confused you or seemed like an unknown you couldn't explain?

4. Did you notice any possible cause-and-effect relationships? (Example: a bird flew away when another animal approached)

5. What would you like to investigate further if you had more time or resources?

Attach your completed worksheet to your observations sheet(s) and any other materials (photos, drawings, recordings, or samples if appropriate) and hand them into your teacher.