

ACTIVITY

The Blindfolded Walk

You and your team will investigate the observation skills that are essential to scientific research. After you have completed the activity, respond to these questions in your journal.

- ▶ What are good observation skills?
- ▶ Why do scientists need to have good observation skills?
- ▶ How do scientists use observation skills in the field?

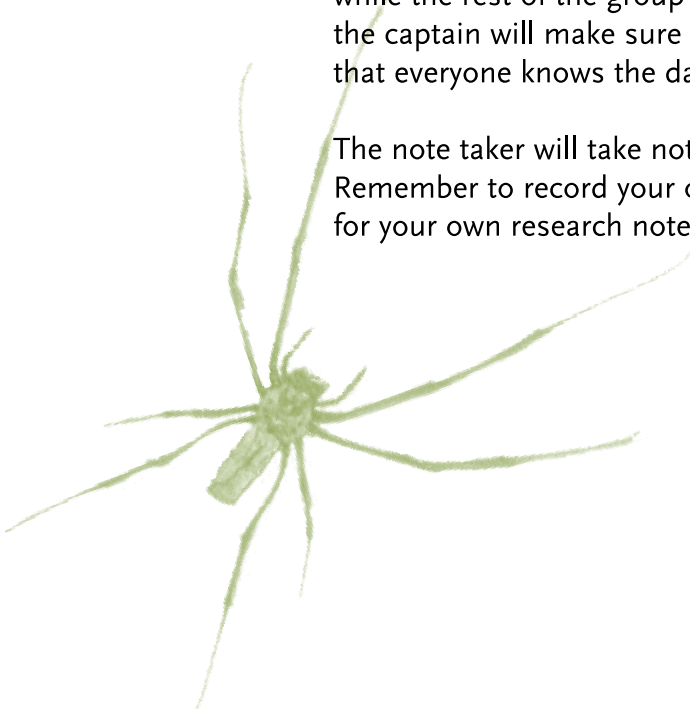
Gather with your team and choose a captain and a note taker for today. Before you begin your investigation, consider with your team what you already know about observing. Use the questions below to structure your discussion and record your notes in your journal.

- ▶ What senses do you use when you observe something?
- ▶ Which senses do you rely on the least? Why?

Imagine you are out in the field, studying an area to see how living things interact there. What observation skills would you need to put into practice? Explain how and why.

The captain will appoint group members to collect the required materials while the rest of the group reviews today's procedure. Before beginning, the captain will make sure that the group has all required materials, and that everyone knows the day's procedure.

The note taker will take notes on the group's findings for your team. Remember to record your observations and explanations in your journal for your own research notes. Include drawings to illustrate your findings.



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MATERIALS

- ▶ blindfolds
- ▶ tissue to use with each round of the walk in order to keep blindfold sanitary
- ▶ journals
- ▶ activity sheets
- ▶ newsprint/chart paper
- ▶ art materials

PROCEDURE

1. Today you'll learn new observation skills by conducting investigations with a blindfold over your eyes. Before you start, develop your hypothesis: What do you think you'll notice with a blindfold over your eyes that you hadn't noticed without one?
2. Students leading the blindfolded person need to be very careful and very responsible about safety procedures. On your activity sheet, jot down some of the safety procedures you'll use today.
3. One person in your group will be blindfolded for each round. One or two people will help guide the blindfolded person and one or two people will take notes. You can lead the blindfolded person to a tree; place his/her hands on the tree and ask him/her to describe the tree's texture, smell, the sound of leaves rustling, etc. The note taker for each round records what the blindfolded person says.
4. Review your teacher's expectations for this activity. If possible, also try observing the smells/sounds/tastes of the school cafeteria, sounds of different-sized balls bouncing, the feel of sunlight versus shade, or the noises and smells of the hallway between classes or during classes.



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GROUP WORKSHEET 1
TEAM _____

GROUP MEMBERS _____

CAPTAIN _____ **NOTE TAKER** _____

ARTIST(S) _____

1. Before you begin the blindfolded walk, establish your hypothesis: What do you think you'll notice with a blindfold over your eyes that you hadn't noticed without one?

2. Leading a blindfolded person is a big responsibility—it requires that you stick to safety procedures. In the space below, record the safety procedures that you and your group will use today to make sure no one get hurt during the activity.

3. Switch roles for each round. Use the charts to record the roles and the blindfolded person's observations.

ROUND	ROLES	OBSERVATIONS
1	Notetaker:	
	Guide:	
	Blindfolded:	

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GROUP WORKSHEET 2
TEAM _____

ROUND	ROLES	OBSERVATIONS
2	Notetaker:	
	Guide:	
	Blindfolded:	
ROUND	ROLES	OBSERVATIONS
3	Notetaker:	
	Guide:	
	Blindfolded:	
ROUND	ROLES	OBSERVATIONS
4	Notetaker:	
	Guide:	
	Blindfolded:	

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GROUP WORKSHEET 3
TEAM _____

4. What similarities do you notice in your observations? Differences?

5. What observational skills did your team develop today?

GROUP DYNAMICS

Comment on the way your group worked together.

