



DIY ACTIVITY



MAKE A TERRARIUM GRADES 3–5

OBJECTIVES

- Identify all components of an ecosystem.
- Recognize how the components of an ecosystem interact.

PROCEDURE

- Add a 1 inch thick layer of rocks in the jar.
- Add a 1 inch thick layer of activated carbon over the rocks.
- Cut a circle of mesh slightly wider than the inside of the jar.
- Place the circle of mesh on top of the carbon.
- Use a spoon to add a 2 inch layer of soil on top of the mesh.
- Then, add the moss and plants.
- Water the plants generously using the spray bottle.
- Close the lid tightly.
- Watch the ecosystem over time and make adjustments as necessary until the balance is just right.

WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

A terrarium is a closed environment of plants and animals that can illustrate how an ecosystem works. With the right balance, once the jar is closed, the plant uses the water, as well sunlight and nutrients from the soil to survive. As the plant sheds leaves, they are broken down and become part of the soil, feeding the microorganisms that live there. With the right balance, the ecosystem inside the terrarium can survive for years.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

This terrarium is a wet ecosystem with moss and lots of water. Can you create a terrarium for a different type of ecosystem? Maybe one where a cactus could survive? What are the needs of a cactus? What components would you need to change?

