**Diatoms Lesson Plans  
Grades: 6-8**

**Lessons to Accompany mydiatoms.org Project**

Unit Duration: 7-10 days

\*\*Extension Lesson included

\*\*Due to the time needed to collect samples, submit them to the Alverson Lab and receive results the following lesson plan may need to be adjusted to fit the needs of your class timeline and students. These lesson plans would best fit as a learning opportunity within the teaching of a larger Ecology Unit.

*Materials:*

* Access to <https://mydiatoms.org/myDiatom_instructions.php>
* Pencils
* Sticky notes or access to application such as Jamboard
* See mydiatoms website for collections materials
* Microscope slides and slide covers
* Droppers
* Microscope(s)
* Science Notebook and/or Digital Document to record science work

*Performance Expectation*:

***MS-LS2-2***

I can explain patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.

*Science & Engineering Practice*:

Constructing Explanations & Designing Solutions

*Crosscutting Concept*:

Patterns

*Performance Expectation*:

**MS-LS2-4**

I canconstruct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.

*Science & Engineering Practice*:

Engaging in Argument from Evidence

*Crosscutting Concept*:

Stability & Change

Day 1

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| --- | --- |
| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons  Materials Needed:   * Science Notebook (hard copy or digital) * Sticky notes / chart paper -or- Digital application such as Jamboard * Access to the website below either whole group or on 1:1 devices | |
| Think-Pair-Share | Have students brainstorm and record on paper/notebook/device |
| Partner | Have students share with a partner |
| Whole Group | Have students get into a Scientists Circle and share out what they already know and put their answers on sticky notes up on a board/chart paper or record on a digital application such as Jamboard |
| Prepare for Data Collection | Put students into groups of 2-4 depending on class size  Introduce and give time to students to explore the Participate portion of the website - <https://mydiatoms.org/myDiatom_instructions.php>  Instruct students to read parts 1 and 2 and discuss in their groups |

Day 2

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons  Materials Needed:   * Science Notebook (hard copy or digital) * Sticky notes / chart paper -or- Digital application such as Jamboard * Access to the website below either whole group or on 1:1 devices * Data Forms (See Below) | |
| Individual  Warm-Up | Have students stop and jot what they talked about and learned yesterday as well as what was discussed as a class |
| Prepare for Data Collection | Continued from Day 1 if not finished - Introduce and give time to students to explore the Participate portion of the website - <https://mydiatoms.org/myDiatom_instructions.php> |
| Whole Group | Facilitate a whole group discussion - where to collect a sample? Brainstorm ideas and write on the board or in a visible area |
| Class/Teacher | Students can vote or you can choose where to get the samples in your area  \*\*You may want to have students watch/read through the website again on how to collect the samples  \*\*Here is where you can also have them discuss/write why they want to collect these samples. Have students make a prediction as to what they will find and write reasoning for why they are choosing this location  \*\*If time does not permit, the teacher can collect the samples and bring into class |
| Teacher/Class | See website on directions for collection and sending information in to Alverson lab  <https://www.mydiatoms.org/myDiatom_instructions.php>  If you are having your class go to the location(s) and collect samples, this can take a few class periods.  If you are limited on time, this can be done by the teacher prior to the start of class.  Teachers can also incorporate lessons on data collection/ samples / have students fill out the form as you are collecting or in class when you have completed the collection.  Sample Data Form (partners or small group): [PDF](https://drive.google.com/file/d/150CldV_vqxs-0oZTi9_9soDjQvn_MVBc/view?usp=sharing)  Form to be completed to return with Samples: [PDF](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10hrt62cS3ehfZhsUeXJ9ISv-Ev0YkV_S/view?usp=sharing) |
| **WAIT TIME** | Information will be returned approximately 3-4 weeks after the samples are received by the lab  \*\*Keep a portion of the sample in your classroom to use for stations activity |

**WHILE WAITING FOR SAMPLES TO BE RETURNED**

\*\*While waiting for samples (3-4 weeks to return from the lab):

1. Students can engage in activities below either just before you are to receive the samples back from the lab or immediately following sending the samples into the lab.
2. The wait time may also be used to continue instruction/lessons related to the Performance Expectations, Crosscutting Concepts and Science and Engineering practices listed at the beginning of these plans.
3. Continued work in the unit of Ecology could be done during the wait time as well.

Day 3

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons  Materials Needed:   * Science Notebook (hard copy or digital) * Sticky notes / chart paper -or- Digital application such as Jamboard * Access to the website below either whole group or on 1:1 devices * Data Forms (See Below) | |
| Individual  Warm-Up | Have students stop and jot what they talked about and learned yesterday - or - review what they discussed before the sample was taken and sent to the lab |
| Group Discussion | Share out with the whole group and discuss/answer any questions that come up |
| Student Pairs | Have student examine pictures/videos of diatoms in pairs  Have students discuss and decide with their partners what diatoms they might see in the data received from the Alverson Lab - make predictions and discuss why they think they may see those diatoms in their data  Possible Links for photos and videos (do not have to use these specifically)   * <https://diatoms.org/what-are-diatoms> - includes information on types, classifications, where they can be found, photos, etc. |
| Student Pairs | Predict - what types of diatoms do you think we will see in our samples? Why? |
| Group | Share out to small group and/or whole class  Record predictions / ideas on Chart Paper or digital media |
| Notebook | Record predictions in Science notebook or digital document |

**\*\*Set up stations for the next two days before class begins. You will need the portion of the sample you set aside during initial collection or collect again before Day 4.**

Day 4

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons  Materials Needed:   * Science Notebook (hard copy or digital) * Sticky notes / chart paper -or- Digital application such as Jamboard * Access to the website below either whole group or on 1:1 devices * Stations Materials: * Microscope or Microscopes * Slides and Slip Covers * Collected Sample(s) * Pipette or Dropper * Tweezers * Gloves * \*\*Teacher will prepare slides of samples from collection before the stations work * YouTube tutorial on preparing wet mount slides: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxTFgDe5CEE&t=1s> | |
| Student Pairs or Small Group | Have students stop and jot what they talked about what predictions they made yesterday and what evidence they are using to back up their claims |
| Student Pairs or Small Group | Have pairs go through stations work and record information in their science notebooks and/or digital document  \*\*Students are working on Asking Questions, Developing Models and Consensus Building  Link to student stations: [PDF](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mn9YC9BKc8SIdMpSA8QpJCbs1l8g89AW/view?usp=sharing) |
| Formative Assessment | Use the information gathered, discussions and the student created story to assess students ability to ask questions, create models and analyze information related to diatoms and the surrounding ecosystem |
| Stations Work | * Have all station materials at each lab station / table group * Set up a timer and give students time to complete each station * Students need access to the internet * Students can record information digitally or in a notebook |
| Student Pairs  Teacher Prep | You can have your students prepare the slides themselves or prepare them ahead of time and have them available for your students |
| Stations | Have students rotate every 3-4 minutes to look at different slides and sketch/draw what they see. |
| Student Pairs or Small Group | Have pairs compare/contrast what they saw at each station and work as a group of four and compile their findings in their Science Notebook |

Day 5

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons  Materials Needed:   * Science Notebook (hard copy or digital) * Sticky notes / chart paper -or- Digital application such as Jamboard * Access to the website below either whole group or on 1:1 devices * Stations Materials: * Microscope or Microscopes * Slides and Slip Covers * Collected Sample(s) * Pipette or Dropper * Tweezers * Gloves * \*\*Teacher will prepare slides of samples from collection before the stations work | |
| Individual  Warm-Up | * Think Pair Share on what students learned during station work yesterday |
| Student Pairs / Small Groups | * Complete Station work from yesterday |

Day 6

\*\*When you have received the data results from the Alverson Lab

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons | |
| Individual  Warm-Up | * Review the models your students created and discussed in the Station work |
| Student Pairs / Small Groups | * In student pairs or groups, have students click on their data link on the website: <https://mydiatoms.org/myDiatom_view.php> * Give students time to explore what types of Diatoms were found in your class sample(s) * Give them time to ask questions and wonder! :) * In their Science notebook, have students record their questions and wonderings |
| Whole Group | * Student Groups / pairs can choose one diatom that was found in the sample and research more information about their diatom at <https://diatoms.org/> * Have student groups / pairs present their findings to their classmates * Discuss as a whole group why each of these diatoms is important to your area ecosystem |

Day 7

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| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons | |
| Individual  Warm-Up | * Review as a whole class your findings yesterday on the variety of diatoms in your sample and how they are important to your local ecosystem |
| Whole Group | * Discuss as a class what types of ideas they came up with in their Station stories about what would happen if the Diatoms all disappeared from the local ecosystem * Record ideas on chart paper and/or digital application like Jamboard * After ideas are recorded on chart paper, you can introduce an assessment project to the groups (student pairs, small groups or even an individual assessment) |
| **Summative Assessment** | * Students will choose one idea/thought/question from the group discussion on what would happen if the Diatoms disappeared from the local ecosystem and create a platform of their choice to present their information to their classmates * Possible Choices: Google Slide Deck, PSA, Tri-Fold Board, Video * Students will use previous websites to conduct research as well as information learned in your Ecology Unit * **Extension**: This could also be utilized in conjunction with the Art Teacher to include an artistic rendering of the diatom they chose to focus their research on |
| **Grading Rubric** | * Link to rubric that could be used for the summative project: [PDF](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p02aVrLE5MDjA1VP9Rjqqv9nN-4HWJcq/view?usp=sharing) |

Extension Project

*Performance Expectation*:

**MS-LS2-4**

**I can** construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.

*Science & Engineering Practice*:

Engaging in Argument from Evidence

*Crosscutting Concept*:

Stability & Change

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project the Essential Question or write on the board  **Why are microscopic organisms important to an ecosystem?**  \*Keep this question up and visible throughout the lessons | |
| Project Introduction | * Teacher will write up a scenario that would apply to their area/climate/local ecosystem and include in that scenario a significant event that would affect the local ecosystem. (ex: fire, flooding, etc.) |
| Student Work | * Students will use information they have gathered/learned/researched in their Science Notebooks to complete the project * Students will relate this information to the role of Diatoms in their local ecosystem * Students will devise a solution that will address the effects on their ecosystem and how these changes can be dealt with scientifically to ensure that the ecosystem remains stable. * Students create a Google Slide Deck presentation on their findings and present to the class. |
| Project Grading Rubric | [PDF](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YquA2rSYnC6dqJUpkZTZlezQRMCsC4vH/view?usp=sharing) |