Investigation 02 | Forest Layers



READ FIRST • Book pages 18–31

Learning goal: Cheeseburger McChickadee wants you to explore how canopy, understory and forest floor provide different conditions and resources for living things.

1 Think and predict

A) What do you already know about forests? Name one plant or animal that lives in a Nova Scotia forest and describe where you might find it.

B) Make a prediction. Which forest layer do you think receives the most direct sunlight? Which layer do you think contains the most fallen leaves and decaying logs? Explain your reasoning.

C) After reading and/or class discussion: Were your predictions supported? Describe one thing you learned about forest layers that surprised you.

2 Investigate: Who lives in each layer?

Choose one organism that uses each forest layer. Describe one resource (food, shelter or moisture) that it finds there, and explain why that layer is useful. An organism may use more than one layer.

Forest layer	Organism	Resource it uses / why this layer helps
Canopy		
Understory		
Forest floor		

Which two layers might the same animal use? Explain your choice.

3 Sketch and label: A forest cross-section

Draw a side view of a Nova Scotia forest from the treetops to the ground. Include and label: (1) canopy, understory and forest floor; (2) at least one organism in each layer; (3) a fallen log; (4) one non-living factor such as sunlight or soil moisture; and (5) TWO arrows showing relationships, with words explaining each arrow.

Drawing / diagram space

After completing your drawing, explain how two different layers provide different resources for living things:

4 Explain with evidence

A tree falls and becomes a log on the forest floor. Explain TWO ways the log helps forest organisms, and describe what happens as fungi and other decomposers break it down. How can this process help plants?

My evidence came from: ☐ Book ☐ Field observation ☐ Class investigation ☐ Other: _____

One question I still have about forests: