

MS-LS2-4 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

- MS-LS2-4. Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on recognizing patterns in data and making warranted inferences about changes in populations, and on evaluating empirical evidence supporting arguments about changes to ecosystems.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Engaging in Argument from Evidence

Engaging in argument from evidence in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to constructing a convincing argument that supports or refutes claims for either explanations or solutions about the natural and designed world(s).

- Construct an oral and written argument supported by empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support or refute an explanation or a model for a phenomenon or a solution to a problem.

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence

- Science disciplines share common rules of obtaining and evaluating empirical evidence.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience

- Ecosystems are dynamic in nature; their characteristics can vary over time. Disruptions to any physical or biological component of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all its populations.

Crosscutting Concepts

Stability and Change

- Small changes in one part of a system might cause large changes in another part.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:

1	Supported claims
a	Students make a claim to be supported about a given explanation or model for a phenomenon. In their claim, students include the idea that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem can affect the populations living there.
2	Identifying scientific evidence
a	Students identify and describe the given evidence (e.g., evidence from data, scientific literature) needed for supporting the claim, including evidence about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the physical or biological components of an ecosystem, including the magnitude of the changes (e.g., data about rainfall, fires, predator removal, species introduction). Changes in the populations of an ecosystem, including the magnitude of the changes (e.g., changes in population size, types of species present, and relative prevalence of a species within the ecosystem). Evidence of causal and correlational relationships between changes in the components of an ecosystem with the changes in populations.
b	Students use multiple valid and reliable sources of evidence.
3	Evaluating and critiquing the evidence
a	Students evaluate the given evidence, identifying the necessary and sufficient evidence for supporting the claim.
b	Students identify alternative interpretations of the evidence and describe why the evidence supports the student's claim.
4	Reasoning and synthesis
a	Students use reasoning to connect the appropriate evidence to the claim and construct an oral or written argument about the causal relationship between physical and biological components of an

	ecosystem and changes in organism populations, based on patterns in the evidence. In the argument, students describe a chain of reasoning that includes:
	i. Specific changes in the physical or biological components of an ecosystem cause changes that can affect the survival and reproductive likelihood of organisms within that ecosystem (e.g., scarcity of food or the elimination of a predator will alter the survival and reproductive probability of some organisms).
	ii. Factors that affect the survival and reproduction of organisms can cause changes in the populations of those organisms.
	iii. Patterns in the evidence suggest that many different types of changes (e.g., changes in multiple types of physical and biological components) are correlated with changes in organism populations.
	iv. Several consistent correlational patterns, along with the understanding of specific causal relationships between changes in the components of an ecosystem and changes in the survival and reproduction of organisms, suggest that many changes in physical or biological components of ecosystems can cause changes in populations of organisms.
	v. Some small changes in physical or biological components of an ecosystem are associated with large changes in a population, suggesting that small changes in one component of an ecosystem can cause large changes in another component.