

TRANSCRIPT: KIDS DISCUSS DECOMPOSITION

Instructor: So, we looked at, what were the decomposers we looked at before with the cards in them? What were they? One started with an F? Go ahead and call it out.

Learners: Fungus!

Instructor: And then there's one with a B?

Learners: Bacteria!

Learners: Invertebrates.

Learner: I caught a leaf.

Instructor: You caught a leaf? Nice!

(learner humming)

(instructor reaches out and touches knee)

Instructor: Okay, so those are some decomposers. Can anyone think of anything else besides for fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates that might be a decomposer, something besides for those that might break down things that used to be alive and their waste into simpler parts and smaller parts that become part of soil?

(pause)

Instructor: Anything else you can think of besides fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates? Keep thinking, think quietly to yourself.

(pause)

Instructor: Raise your hand if you have an idea. Something besides for fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates that might break things down into simpler stuff, things that used to be alive or their waste. Ryan, what do you have?

Ryan: Hyenas.

Instructor: Hyenas?

Ryan: They're sometimes scavengers, and they eat whatever's left dead.

Instructor: So, what do you guys think of the hyena idea? You guys know what hyenas are, right? Okay, so tell us more about hyenas that you know, Ryan.

Ryan: I watched a show. People say they're scavengers and just pick up scraps, which they do do. But sometimes they actually, um, kill as well as, uh, just hunt... They kill instead of picking up scraps.

Instructor: So, if a lion kills a gazelle or something and it's lying there.

TRANSCRIPT: KIDS DISCUSS DECOMPOSITION (continued)

Ryan: Then the hyena comes over and...

Instructor: Comes afterward?

Ryan: Yeah.

Instructor: And eats the scraps that are leftover?

Ryan: Yeah.

Instructor: Or are you saying they sometimes kill the animal and eat it?

(Ryan nods)

Instructor: Okay, what do you guys think? Would you call that a decomposer? Are they breaking things that used to be alive down into simpler and smaller parts that become part of the soil? What do you guys think? Talk to the person next to you. *Turn & Talk.*

(kids talking)

Instructor: Do you think hyenas break things that used to be alive down?

Learner 1: Yeah, 'cause, yeah 'cause they...

Learner 2: Yeah.

(instructor hand motions for them to continue)

Learner 1: When they....

Learner 2: I think they might be decomposers because, like, sometimes they get in fights to get like some things to eat too, so then when they're done, other animals can also come and eat and stuff.

Instructor: But are they breaking down something that used to be alive into smaller and simpler parts?

Learners: Cricket! I see a cricket!

Learner: It's right there!

Learner: Can we catch it?

Instructor: Okay, next discussion question: Do you think that that cricket is a decomposer?

Learners, many at the same time: Yes, yes.

Instructor: *Turn & Talk* to the same person, do you think that cricket is a decomposer, and say what your evidence is.

(lots of learners talking)



TRANSCRIPT: KIDS DISCUSS DECOMPOSITION (continued)

Learner: I remember watching a TV show.

Instructor: That's your evidence, because you saw it somewhere?

Chaperon: It's an interesting question.

(learner shakes head)

Chaperon: You don't think it eats dead things?

Learner: No, it just eats grass.

Instructor: So the question is: Is it a decomposer? Does it eat things that were dead and break them down into things that are simpler and smaller that could be part of the soil? So, let's do it with the talking stick. Who's ready to talk to the whole group here? Let's talk about the cricket. Do you think the cricket is a decomposer? Here ya go.

Learner: Um, no, because I believe that crickets only eat like, grass.

Instructor: So, maybe crickets eat grass, so you'd say that it's not a decomposer if it eats grass?

Learner: Yeah.

Instructor: If it eats grass, do you think it's breaking things down that used to be alive down in simpler parts that might be part of the soil?

Learner: Yeah.

Instructor: Oh, you do.

Learner: No...

Instructor: No? Oh, sounds like you're a little conflicted, huh? That's okay. Let's take the talking stick, or why don't you pass it to the next person. Raise your hand if you want to add to the conversation, and you'll toss the stick to him gently.

Learner: Tiger.

(learner throws talking stick)

Tiger: Ow! It's heavy. Alright, so, I think the cricket is a decomposer, and I think that everything that eats is a decomposer even if it's a vegetarian or a, like, a carnivore or meat-eater.

Instructor: You just said something really provocative. You just said, "I think that anything that eats other things is a decomposer."

Tiger: That eats anything.

TRANSCRIPT: KIDS DISCUSS DECOMPOSITION (continued)

Instructor: That eats anything. Okay, so say more about that. What makes you say that?

Tiger: It's because even if you're a vegetarian, like you're eating veggies and plants and plants can decompose and if you eat meat, that could decompose.

Instructor: So you're saying that even if you eat meat or plants, anything that eats those things is a decomposer.

Tiger: Anything that eats at all is a decomposer.

Instructor: Anything that eats all. What do you guys think? Agree? Disagree? Raise your hand if you've got something to say, to add to this conversation. This is a pretty interesting idea he just brought up there. Right behind you, pass the mic.

Ryan: I agree.

Instructor: Say why you agree. What's your evidence?

Ryan: Because technically, that is right because everything has to eat to survive. And no matter if you're just like a little fish in the water, you still have to eat something.

Learner: But trees cannot decompose.

Instructor: But remember, the main question is: Are you breaking things that used to be alive down into something that is simpler and smaller parts, becoming part of the soil?

(Ryan nods)

Instructor: You think so, yeah?

Learner: The cricket's on your leg.

Instructor: Where?

Learner: Catch it, catch it!

(instructor tosses cricket out of the circle)

Instructor: Oops, cricket flew. So, let's go back to his point. He says, anything that eats anything is a decomposer. Turn & Talk to the person next to you about whether you agree with that statement or not and say why you agree or you disagree with that statement.

(learners talking)

Learner: Because that thing used to be alive.

Learner: It's like a cycle.

