

Section 6: Scavenger Hunt/Photo Journal

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to engage with the environment around you and begin thinking like an environmental scientist. By observing everyday surroundings, whether in your backyard, neighborhood, local parks, or while traveling—you will start to recognize ecological concepts in action. Although some of the terminology you encounter in AP Environmental Science may seem unfamiliar at first, the natural phenomena those terms describe are all around you and part of your daily life.

For this project, you will complete a **scavenger hunt/photo journal** in which you document specific environmental topics through photography. Each entry must include a **photo of the concept along with you in the image (selfie-style)** to demonstrate authentic, firsthand observation. These images should capture real-world examples of ecological principles, human impacts, and environmental interactions.

At the end of the assignment, you will compile your photos into a **printed photo journal**. This journal will serve as both a visual record of your exploration and an introduction to the key themes we will study throughout the course. Through this process, you will begin building the skills of observation, connection, and analysis that are essential for success in AP Environmental Science. So, get outside, stay curious, and start seeing the environment through a scientific lens—your classroom is everywhere!

This summer, your mission:

1. Locate and photograph an item from the scavenger list below. Choose from any **25** of the following topics. I have listed more than 25, but you are only required to do 25 of your choice.
2. Once you have found that item, then take a picture of the item AND YOURSELF next to the item. Think: selfie! If you are not in the picture, then you will not receive credit for the picture.
3. Print your pictures and place in a composition book. Title of the book: APES PHOTO JOURNAL
4. The following should be next to each picture printed:
 - The **name** of the item you photographed. Saying something is a pine tree is not considered an identification. Determine what kind of pine tree it is (white pine, pitch pine, etc.). Identifications can be difficult but do your best. Scientific names are preferred over common names.
 - Next, an **explanation** of how your picture represents the item on the list. This needs to be in complete sentences (no bullets).
 - Finally, the **location** as to where this picture was taken. Be as specific as possible.

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****You may only use an organism/item to fulfill one requirement from the list****

TOPICS:

Population	Sustainable agricultural practice
Producer/autotroph	Hydro-Dam
Herbivore	Exposed soil horizons (at least two identifiable)
Omnivore	Erosion
Carnivore	National Park (next to an entrance sign)
Detritivore	Wildlife refuge or wilderness area (next to an entrance sign)
Decomposition	Aquaculture
Adaptation	Nuclear power plant
Fungus	Solar panels
Primary succession	Windmill/wind turbine
Secondary succession	Hybrid car
Pioneer species	Compost
Coevolution	Invasive species
Mutualism	Native species
Commensalism	Virginia state bird
Parasitism	Water treatment facility
Predation	Municipal sanitary landfill
Plant defense against herbivores	Recycling center
Warning coloration	Abiotic component of an ecosystem (natural not manmade)
Camouflage	Biotic component of an ecosystem
Limiting Resource	
Keystone species	
Ecosystem service	

DO NOT place this section in your APES envelope. You will use this information (regarding criteria, formatting, and topics) as you organize and complete your photo journal

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Student Name: _____

Rubric (Grading Sheet) for APES Photo Journal Assignment

1. Selfies / Photo Evidence (25 points)

All 25 entries must include a selfie with the student visible.

- ☐ 25 pts – All 25 selfies present, clear, and relevant
- ☐ 20 pts – 21–24 selfies present
- ☐ 15 pts – 16–20 selfies present
- ☐ 10 pts – 10–15 selfies present
- ☐ 0–5 pts – Fewer than 10 selfies

Score: _____ / 25

2. Scientific Information & Explanation (30 points)

Complete sentences; accurate explanation connecting image to concept.

- ☐ 30 pts – Thorough, accurate, strong APES terminology
- ☐ 25 pts – Mostly accurate; minor errors
- ☐ 20 pts – Some inaccuracies or lack of depth
- ☐ 15 pts – Many incomplete or weak explanations
- ☐ 0–10 pts – Minimal or missing explanations

Score: _____ / 30

3. Identification of Topic (15 points)

Specific identification; scientific names encouraged.

- ☐ 15 pts – Specific, accurate IDs; scientific names used when possible
- ☐ 12 pts – Mostly specific; occasional general terms
- ☐ 10 pts – Frequently general (e.g., “tree”)
- ☐ 5–8 pts – Many incorrect/vague IDs
- ☐ 0–4 pts – Little to no attempt

Score: _____ / 15

4. Location Documentation (10 points)

Specific location required for each entry.

- ☐ 10 pts – All locations specific and complete
- ☐ 8 pts – Most locations present
- ☐ 6 pts – Several missing/vague
- ☐ 3–5 pts – Many missing/unclear
- ☐ 0–2 pts – Little to no location info

Score: _____ / 10

5. Completion of Entries (10 points)

25 total entries required.

- ☐ 10 pts – 25 entries completed
- ☐ 8 pts – 22–24 entries
- ☐ 6 pts – 18–21 entries
- ☐ 4 pts – 15–17 entries
- ☐ 0–3 pts – Fewer than 15 entries

Score: _____ / 10

6. Organization, Title & Neatness (10 points)

Composition book format; title required.

- ☐ 10 pts – Neat, organized, titled “APES Photo Journal”
- ☐ 8 pts – Mostly neat; minor issues
- ☐ 6 pts – Some disorganization/title may be incomplete
- ☐ 4 pts – Poor organization//title may be incomplete
- ☐ 0–3 pts – Very disorganized/missing title

Score: _____ / 10

TOTAL POINTS: _____ / 100

Design & create your photo journal and mark it completed on your checklist. You will turn in the photo journal book on the first day of class along with this rubric -separate from the APES envelope.