

# Environments

## 4th Grade Life Science Storyline

*With critters no longer a part of ESD 112 STEM Kits, here are some modifications and additional fun activities to get our students learning outdoors about senses and survival!*



# LESSON 4: Senses and Survival

## Skip Days 1-6

### Session 1 (or more): Imagine being a pika

*This session may be split up into 2 or more sessions if needed. It can even be spread into 5 days, focusing on a sense each day (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch).*

#### Warm-up

Tell students that today, we will be going outdoors and pretend to be a pika in our school yard. We will be focusing on how our different senses as a pika might help us survive. [Use the Pika: Senses and Survival Outdoor Investigation](#) to have students reflect after each step.

#### Main activity

Take students outside and have students sit on the grass at least six feet apart from each other.

1. First, we will see how the sense of sight or seeing might help a pika survive. Have students imagine that they are a pika. How would they use their sense of sight? What would they see and how might that help them survive? Have students record their thoughts on their [thinking template](#). Allow them to talk in small teams. Ask students to use drawings and words to describe their thinking.
2. Next we'll study how the sense of hearing might help the pika. In order to do that we will close our eyes and focus on what we hear. Ask students to close their eyes and keep their eyes shut. Ask students to save their thoughts until after the activity. "Imagine you are a pika, running around, finding food and materials for your nest. What do you hear?" Pause and let students listen. Walk/run around the students or play [hawk sounds](#) (predator). You may also use your phone to put on a video with some [background forest sounds](#) if there is not a lot for students to hear around the play yard. Give students a break to write down their reflections on their paper. Ask students to use drawings and words to describe their thinking.
3. Next, how might the pika use its nose? Have students close their eyes and smell. What do they smell? How might smell help the pika survive? Have students pause and write down or draw their reflections on their paper.
4. Touch, that's important! Have students use their hands to feel the ground (grass, plants, leaves, dirt, etc.). How do you think the pika uses its sense of touch to be able to survive? Have students pause and write down and draw their reflections on their paper.

#### Materials Needed

[Thinking template](#)

Clipboards

Paper

Writing instrument

Teacher phone to play sounds (optional)



# LESSON 4 (cont.)

5. Taste is also super important! We won't be tasting anything, but, how do you think the pika uses taste to help it survive? Have students pause and write down and draw their reflections on their paper.

## Wrap-up


Have students share their mini-models from their handouts. Have students answer the question: Are the pika's senses important for its survival?

## Session 2: Finding critters outside! (30-45 min)

### Warm-up

Ask students, "Where do you think pikas prefer to live? Where do you prefer to live? What's important to you about a home? Today, we will be heading outside to try to find a creature and see where it likes to live!"

### Main activity

 **Field STEM opportunity:** Give students the [Where Critters Shelter handout](#) and have them go outside to find a critter and draw a diagram of where it likes to live. Have students work in groups of 2-3. Give students time to explore, search, and observe.

Hints for finding critters:

- Look in the soil in moist areas, may need to dig with a pencil
- Look under rocks
- On branches
- Look in trees for nesting animals
- Under moss
- On or under stumps of wood

## Wrap-up

Have students share their team's findings with another team. Have teams think together about the pika. What do they remember about the pika habitat and how pikas like to shelter?

### Materials Needed

[Where Critters Shelter handout](#)

Clipboards

Paper

Writing instrument