

Topic: ecosystems

Microscopic Creatures in Water

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/microscopiccreatures.html>

Water can be home to a lot of interesting creatures and microorganisms, especially if it's dirty water found in ponds or near plants. Take some samples, view them under a microscope and see what you can find. How clean is the water from your tap compared to the water found in a pond? Experiment and see what kind of microscopic creatures you can find!

What you'll need:

- A concave slide
- A dropper
- A microscope
- Different samples of water (tap water, pond water, muddy water etc). Near plants or in the mud are good places to take samples as they usually contain more microorganisms.

Instructions:

1. Set up your microscope, preferably using its highest setting.
2. Use the dropper to take some water from one of your samples and put it on the concave slide. Focus the microscope, what can you see? Be patient if you can't see anything. If you still can't see anything and have checked that you are in focus, try a different water sample.
3. Look at how the creatures move. After observing their movements you might like to record their behaviors and draw them.

What are you looking at?

Some of the creatures and microorganisms you might be able to see include:

- Euglenas - These are between a plant and an animal, they have a long tail called a flagellum which allows them to move.
- Protozoa - They have a flagella (tail) which can be hard to see, the difference between protozoa and algae is often hard to define.
- Amoebas - These microorganisms swim by wobbling. They also surround their food like a blob in order to eat it.
- Algae - Not considered to be plants by most scientists, these organisms might be colored yellowish, greenish or reddish. They may also be found by themselves or in chains.
- There might even be larger creatures such as worms or brine shrimp in your water samples, depending on where you took them from.