

Creating a Forest Diorama

1. Start with an 8x10 sheet of cardstock paper.
2. Position your paper so it is landscape in front of you. (10x8). Measure up 3" from the bottom of the paper and draw a line across. This will become the underground. Fill in this area with organisms, creatures, plant roots etc that live in the ground.
3. Above this line, fill in the area with nature that you see above ground: trees, animals, insects, flowers etc.
4. Fold in half. (Width way or hamburger way).
5. Using a separate sheet of paper, cut a 6" square.
6. On two connecting sides of your 6" square, measure a ½" all the way down both sides and fold in. Now you should have a 5" square with two ½" edges. Where the corner of the folded edge meets, cut a diagonal line so one of the edges can fold under the other. This 5" square represents the ground. Fill in this area with leaves, plants, soil, tree logs, creatures like millipedes and decomposers such as mushrooms. (Use a rolled up sheet of brown construction paper make a tree log.)
7. Using the connecting edges glue in the 5" square, or the ground, to the 10 x 8" cardstock at the 3" mark, or where the underground area begins.
If the corner of the square is tight enough, the ground will stand on its own. If it starts to lean too much, use brown construction paper to create beams to help stabilize the ground. These will end up looking like tree roots.
8. Cut a 5 x 5" square out of brown construction paper to make a tree. Roll the paper to make a 5" tube to represent the tree trunk. Glue the edge of the roll to secure the tube shape.
Place the tree in the corner of the diorama. To secure the tree in place, you can use a stapler to staple the tree to the paper to keep it standing. (Place the stapler approximately halfway down the tube.)
OR
You can cut approximately ¼ - ½" slivers around the bottom of the tree trunk. Fold these out and glue to the "ground" to keep the tree standing.
8. Take a picture of a student sitting in the forest.
9. Have the student cut themselves out of the printed picture of them sitting in the forest and glue it so they are sitting by, or in front of the tree.

***This activity goes with two different Project Learning Tree Lessons; Web of Life and In the Forest of S.T Shrew.

1). For the Web of Life lesson, have the students research different organisms that would live inside of a forest, including the producers (), animals (), and decomposers () to include in their diorama.

2). The Forest of S.T Shrew lesson is a story about organisms that live in the forest. After creating the dioramas, have the students write a story about the organisms that live inside their forest. The story should include: items that live on a tree, under the tree, and decomposers found in the ground.

