



## Living River of Words Riparian and Desert Vegetation Investigation Grades 7-12

**Description:** Field study portion of a Living River of Words Arts and Science program. Students rotate through three sessions during the two – three hour field study trip.

During the Riparian and Desert Vegetation Investigation students work in small teams to observe and identify riparian and desert adapted plants. As they identify the plants, students make notes on the plant survey worksheet (plant name, location, condition, and abundance). The student teams combine to discuss and compare their plant survey data with plant survey data from the Living River Report. Facilitated by the instructor, each group presents a summary of their discussion to the entire group.

**Duration:** Field trip session rotation – 30 - 60 minutes

**Objectives:**

- Students experience the lush riparian habitat along the Santa Cruz River where the water is flowing in the riverbed.
- Students make observations; identify plants, and record observations.
- Students examine and discuss the riparian ecosystem functions.
- Students use reference materials to inform discussion and understanding of the *The Living River* restoration project.

**Description of Activity:**

1. Students work in small teams (two to three) to observe and identify plants growing along the banks of the Santa Cruz River, with a focus on trees and shrubs. As they identify the plants, students make notes on the worksheet: plant name, where it is, the plant is growing, condition, and the abundance.
2. Students return to the ramada/tables. The groups combine to make groups of six-eight to discuss and respond to questions on the worksheet. Facilitated by the instructor, each group presents a summary of their discussion to the entire group.

**Vocabulary:**

Ecosystem

Riparian

Phenology

**Equipment and Materials:**

Ecosystem Investigation Worksheet

The Living River Report

Santa Cruz River Plant Guide

Clipboards and Pencils

**Linked to Arizona Academic Standards:**

**Science:** SC07-08-S3C1-01, 02; SC07-S4C3-01, 02; SC08-S4C4-01, 04; SCHS-S1C2-05; SCHS-S1C3-01; SCHS-C4-03; SCHS- S3C1-01,05;SCHS-S4C3-01,02