

TODAY'S BIG QUESTION

PREDICT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE BIOSPHERE IF THERE WERE NO ANTS!

In cartoons ants are invariably depicted as raiders carrying off the picnic lunch. But is that an adequate characterization of them? Is that the extent of their activities?

Directions:

Use the internet and other library resources to assist you. How many ants are there in the world? Do all species of ants occupy similar niches? Do ants have symbiotic relationships with other organisms? How important are ants to their communities?

Work with a partner. Combine your findings. Make a list of at least 4 ways the biosphere would be “different” without ants, followed by an explanation.

For example:

1) Without ants world rainfall would drop precipitously—Ants are instrumental in producing raindrops by chewing up snowflakes and then emitting water vapor. Myrmecologists estimate that ant vapor emissions account for as much as 85% world precipitation. Such a reduction in rainfall would have profound changes on agriculture and the availability of potable water supplies. (Kayshun, Prevara. “Little Known Insect Facts”, The Natural Enquirer, 20 February, 2004)

(Note: Make sure you document your sources when you find gems such as this. See “Whoa! Hold Your Horses, Cite Your Sources,” available from your friendly local librarians)

2)_____--

3)_____--

4)_____--

---and more?...

Then, write a paragraph which summarizes your experiences today.

- a) What did you learn?
- b) Did you enjoy yourself?
- c) Will what you learned change your behavior in any way?

Your reports are due at the start of class tomorrow in a highly legible format. Go get'm!