

## Grass Safari Card

In small groups:

1. Take a walk around the schoolyard and see if you can find a whole plant that is a grass. Use this checklist to decide if your plant is a grass or not:

- Jointed stem with a hard node at each joint
- Stem rounded, no edges (you can roll it between your fingers)
- Leaves long and thin, pointed at the tip
- Leaf starts at a node and wraps around the stem, then bends outward
- Leaf veins parallel, like ridges running lengthwise in the leaf
- Flower head at top of stem (usually not on side branches)
- Does not have big colorful petals



Is your plant a grass? If not, keep looking until you find one.

2. Close your eyes and feel your grass stem with your hands. Count the nodes. Now open your eyes and count again. Did you find them all with your eyes closed?
3. Find a plant that looks like a grass but isn't. Why do you think it isn't a grass? (use the checklist above!)
4. Look at a grass plant in a place that has been mowed. Can you find all the features in the checklist? Can you find any that are flowering? Can a grass make seeds even if it is mowed?
5. Find a grass growing in a difficult place. Why is this place challenging? Think of some reasons why a grass could grow here but another plant could not. Mark the place to show other groups.
6. Find a natural place where lots of grasses are growing. Is it sunny or shady? Find a natural place where there are very few grasses growing. Is it sunny or shady? Based on this, what conditions are best for grasses?
7. Look for grass flowers and seed heads. How many different kinds can you find? Make a list giving each kind a made-up name to remember it by. Which kind was the most common? Collect some of each kind (ONLY IF it is plentiful) for using later in the grass displays.

