

Highlight
important
vocabulary
words.

Science Shorts -8

Relationships Between Organisms

Everything on Earth doesn't exist in its own little bubble. Species interact every day. That interaction is a vital part of how organisms develop and change over time. When you study species, it is important to watch the way they interact with their surroundings. There are four basic types of relationships that living things have with one another.

Sometimes one species can benefit from a relationship and not hurt the other. That relationship describes commensalism. I've got a nice looking branch that no one's using. A plant comes over and settles on in. It uses my branch as a place to live. But what do I care? It doesn't bother me. That's what commensalism is all about. One plant gets a place to live and the other doesn't care and is not hurt. You can remember commensalism by thinking about the prefix co. Co means together.

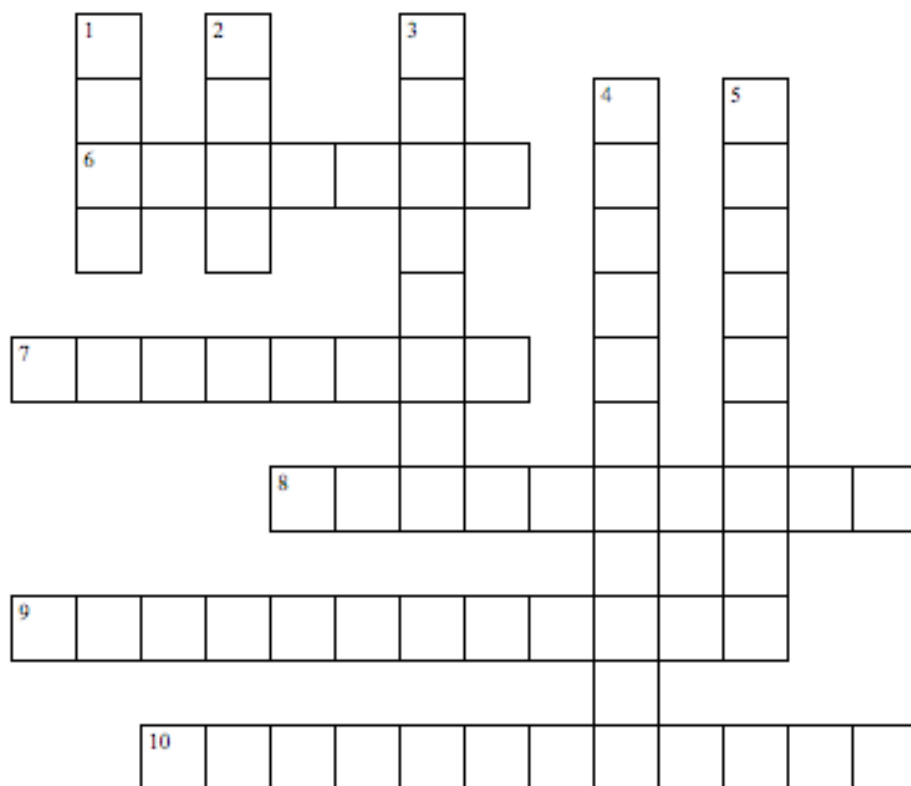
The heart of mutualism is that two species live together in harmony. Both species receive an advantage by working with the other. It's wonderful. It's beautiful. More importantly, it helps them both survive. We suppose you could use rescue dogs as an example. The masters take care of the dogs and the dogs learn how to save people. Everyone benefits in the end. You can remember mutualism by remembering "mutual friends."

There are many examples of predator-prey relationships: wolves eating rabbits, frogs eating insects. Somebody eats someone else. It's not pretty, but it does encourage the development and advancement of species.

There's a special type of predator-prey relationship called parasitism. Now you should think about all the creepy crawlies like fleas, ticks, viruses, and mosquitoes. They all feed off a host, not killing it right away but slowly sucking the life out of it. Parasites help no one but themselves.

Competition is a relationship that happens when two species are competing for the same resources. If there are only ten trees with fruit and I am better at reaching the fruit than you are, sorry, you don't get any. When you don't get any fruit you die. That's just the way nature works. Competition usually happens when you have a limited amount of resources. There is one important idea to remember. Sometimes no one wins. Sometimes if everything is even it can be a stalemate and both species compete, but both survive. Imagine if we are different species, but have the same skills. No one would be a winner in that case.

Relationships



ACROSS

- 6 A type of organism
- 7 Examples are mosquitoes, ticks and fleas
- 8 A relationship where one organism is helped and the other is harmed
- 9 A relationship where one organism is helped while the other organism is not harmed
- 10 Interactions between organisms

DOWN

- 1 Organism affected by a parasite
- 2 An organism that is hunted by other organisms
- 3 An organism that hunts and eats other organisms
- 4 A relationship where two species are struggling for the same resource
- 5 A relationship where two species help each other