

# Ecological Impacts

**Time:** 2 class periods or 2 hours

**Supplies:** Student Activity Instructions (per group), Invasive plant species or noxious weed lists for county or state, Ecological Impacts Reading, Ecological Impacts Worksheet (per group), library or internet access, writing instrument (per group), poster board, colored pencils, other supplies for visual aspect of presentations

## Introduction

At this point in the module, students will have an understanding of some ways invasive plants spread, some of their unique plant adaptations, and how quickly invasive plant species establish and overtake an area. Students will work in groups to determine how an invasive plant or noxious weed in their area could affect local native species. <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/unitedstates/state.shtml> is a site that lets users select their state to find information on invasive plants and noxious weeds in their state. <http://www.eddmaps.org/tools/choosecounty.cfm> is a link that provides a list of invasive plant species documented in specific counties. Students will research the invasive plant they select and the native flora and fauna in their area to come up with hypotheses on how the invasive plant affects other organisms in the local ecosystem.

## Background

Please refer to the Ecological Impacts Reading.

## Activity

1. Use the links above to find a list of invasive plant species in your state or county. Provide this list to your students. You are free to instruct your students to use the links to find species by themselves if you prefer.
2. Divide students into groups of 3-4.
3. Instruct each group to pick a local invasive plant or noxious weed species from the list you provide or from the online sources mentioned previously.
4. The groups will research their species online on local, state, or federal government sites, university websites (.edu sites), scientific articles, or other reputable sources. They should learn the plant's habitat and any changes it makes in the ecosystem.
5. Students will then connect the effects of the invasive plant on the conditions of other organism populations in the area. They can brainstorm native plants and animals that they have seen or know of in the area, or they can research area species.
6. Have each group fill out an Ecological Impacts worksheet.
7. Students will create a 3-5 minute presentation about their invasive plant species or noxious weed and how it could affect the local ecosystem. Base presentation content off of the Ecological Impacts worksheet. Presentations can be in the form of posters, skits, public service announcements, powerpoints, etc.

8. Groups will take turns giving their presentations to the class.