



OBSERVING TIDAL POOLS

and Their Ecosystems

Tidal pools are small habitats found along rocky shorelines. They form when the ocean tide goes out, leaving pools of water behind. Many living things are adapted to survive in these changing conditions. In this experiment, you will observe and record the plants, animals, and features of a tidal pool ecosystem.



? QUESTION

What living things and nonliving features can be observed in a tidal pool, and how do they interact in this ecosystem?

🎯 HYPOTHESIS

If I observe a tidal pool, then I think I will see

because _____

🛡️ SAFETY FIRST

- Go with a responsible adult.
- Wear non-slip shoes and watch your step.
- Never turn your back on the ocean.
- Do not pick up or disturb marine life unnecessarily.
- Wash your hands after the activity.

⚙️ PROCEDURE

1. Find a tidal pool area during low tide with a responsible adult.
2. Observe the tidal pool without disturbing it.
3. Use your senses and tools to identify living things and nonliving features.
4. Record your observations in the data table below. Take photos or sketches if you like.
5. Return any rocks or animals to their original place gently.
6. Reflect on your observations and answer the questions.

🔍 DATA TABLE – MY OBSERVATIONS

Living Thing (Plant or Animal)	Where Found (in pool, on rock, under rock, etc.)	Description (color, size, shape, movement, etc.)	What Do You Think It Needs to Survive in the Tidal Pool?	Sketch or Photo (✓)

🏔️ NONLIVING FEATURES

List and describe the nonliving (abiotic) features you observed in the tidal pool.

Nonliving Feature	Description

TIDE CONDITIONS: ☐ Low Tide ☐ Rising Tide ☐ High Tide ☐ Falling Tide

Notes: _____

📋 MATERIALS

- Observation sheet (this page)
- Pencil
- Tide pool field guide or ID app (optional)
- Small clear container or viewing jar
- Ruler or measuring tape
- Digital camera or phone (optional)
- Notebook

💡 HELPFUL TIPS

- Visit during low tide for the best access.
- Observe gently—put things back where you found them.
- Look under rocks (carefully) for more life.
- Notice how things are connected. For example, a seaweed might provide shelter for tiny animals.

💭 REFLECTION

1. What was the most interesting living thing you observed? Why?

2. How are the living things in the tidal pool adapted to their environment?

3. How might changes in the environment (e.g., pollution, climate change, rising sea levels) affect this ecosystem?

