

April 25, 2020

Where Bacteria Live on Our Tongues

Student Discussion Worksheet

Directions:

After reading the *Science News* article "[Here's where bacteria live on your tongue cells](#)," answer the following questions.

Individual Questions

1. What organisms make up the ecological community identified in the article? Describe the community's environment.
2. What are the general interactions among the organisms in the ecological community?
3. Relationships between different species shape how ecological communities form. Scientists define the relationships, called interspecific interactions, by the beneficial, harmful or nonexistent effects the interactions have on species. Do your own research to define and give an example of each type of interspecific interaction listed below. Indicate the effect of the interaction on both species. Be sure to use reliable sources.

Competition

Predation

Commensalism

Mutualism

Parasitism

4. What interspecific interactions exist between the organisms in the article? Explain the effects the interactions have on each organism.

5. What other examples of interspecific interactions do you think might exist in the community?

6. Why do you think the different types of bacteria found on tongue cells are organized into “neighborhoods”?

Partner Discussion

With a partner, think about a community you are familiar with, such as your school, your neighborhood or your town. Identify relationships among people in your community. Next, choose three types of interspecific interactions and explain how some of the community relationships you identified may be similar to those interactions. Finally, create metaphors based on your explanations.