



Lake Life at Ice Out Grades 4-6 Essay

Introduction

Ah! The first warm days of spring are here. You can feel the sunshine on your face as you gaze across the frozen lake. What is that sound!? You hear a soft tinkling, and suddenly parts of the ice break into pencil-like crystals, which fall into the water. Waves of water lap the edges and make even more ice break off. Before long you stand looking out over open water. You have just experienced ice out.

Ice out on a lake is the day in spring when the ice leaves. Over the years, these dates have been important to people who have used the frozen lake for ice harvesting, ice fishing, or other types of recreation and transportation. People who have used open water of lakes for log driving and boating also have had an interest in ice out and have recorded ice out dates on lots of Maine



Essay Question

Ice out means that humans can use the lake in different ways, but it also has an effect on the animals and plants that make the lake their home. During winter under the ice, the water is cold and still. Many creatures stay close to the bottom, and some of them are dormant all winter long. When the ice melts and the water is exposed everything changes.

Pre-writing skit

With 3-4 classmates, imagine that you are a lake animal or plant who is experiencing the exciting transition from winter to spring. Using the web site <http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology.htm>, research and create a 3-5 minute skit involving all the characters from one of these groups:
Group 1: Beaver, Red Fox, Silver Maple, Big Tooth Aspen
Group 2: Muskrat, Greater Bladderwort, Common Cattail, Red-tailed Hawk
Group 3: Bull Frog, Eastern Dobsonfly, Common Snapping Turtle, Largemouth Bass

Essay writing

Now that you have some ideas choose to become one creature and write about your life cycle and how ice out affects you. Be sure to include:

1. what you eat,
2. how you avoid predators,
3. where you live when there is ice on the lake and when ice has left the lake.

Grade 5-6 Extension

Describe at least one way ice out makes it easier and one way that makes it harder for your creature to survive.

Finally, look at the graph provided, which shows ice out dates on a Maine lake. Interpret the graph, and talk about what the trend of ice out could mean to your creature in the future.

Essay length:

4th grade 200 words, 5th—6th grade 400 words

Sample Graph of Ice Out Data



