

Dear Parent,

Your son's or daughter's science class will soon begin exploring the chapter entitled "The Earth's Ecosystems." In this chapter, students will learn about the different areas of the Earth and the organisms that are adapted for survival in each area. By the end of the chapter, students should demonstrate a clear understanding of the chapter's main ideas and should be able to discuss the following topics:

1. the definition of *biome* (Section 1)
2. names and characteristics of three different forest biomes (Section 1)
3. contrasting characteristics of temperate grasslands and savannas (Section 1)
4. the importance of permafrost to the arctic tundra biome (Section 1)
5. distinctions of the different areas of the ocean (Section 2)
6. the importance of plankton in marine ecosystems (Section 2)
7. coral reefs and intertidal areas (Section 2)
8. the uniqueness of polar marine biomes (Section 2)
9. the characteristics of rivers and streams (Section 3)
10. the littoral zone of a pond (Section 3)
11. characteristics of and differences between two types of wetlands (Section 3)

Questions to Ask Along the Way

You can help your child learn about these topics by asking interesting questions as he or she progresses through the chapter. For example, you may wish to ask your child the following questions:

- What are biomes?
- Which biome has more different animals and plants than any other biome on the planet?
- What is an estuary?
- How do lakes disappear? What do they become?

The Internet at Home

If you have Internet service at home, you and your child can access information related to the chapter entitled “The Earth’s Ecosystems.” The following resources are available for your use.

sciLINKS: At www.scilinks.org you will find links to Web sites that have been selected by the staff at the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). The staff at NSTA regularly scans the Internet to find sites that are current, engaging, and appropriate for middle school students. Check out the latest links by typing in the *sciLINKS* numbers listed below.

GO TO: www.scilinks.org

TOPIC: Forests

sciLINKS NUMBER: HSM0609

TOPIC: Marine Ecosystems

sciLINKS NUMBER: HSM0911

TOPIC: Freshwater Ecosystems

sciLINKS NUMBER: HSM0621

go.hrw.com: The resources at this Web site come to you directly from the publisher of your child’s textbook. Here you will find resources to help your son or daughter better understand the chapter entitled “The Earth’s Ecosystems.” For example, *Science Puzzlers, Twisters & Teasers* worksheets use the chapter’s vocabulary terms and concepts as a basis for lighthearted yet challenging science fun. For help in generating ideas for science projects, you may refer to *Long-Term Projects & Research Ideas*. You can also turn to the Resources for Parents section of the *Science Fair Guide* for information on planning, preparing, and presenting a science fair project. You can access these materials and other information by entering the keyword below.

GO TO: go.hrw.com

KEYWORD: HL5ECO

Thank you for your time and interest. Your participation in your child’s education is a sure way to encourage learning!

Sincerely,