



Succession

Teacher Printout: Description Cards

<p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p>Lightning has started a wildfire in a mixed pine forest. Trees, bushes, and grasses are burning hot and quickly.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>You mostly observe blackened skeletons of trees, charred debris, and gray ash littering the ground. What was once a complex forest ecosystem is gone. Most animals died or have fled, and you can see the barren hills in the distance, evidence of the wildfire's extent and impact on this landscape.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">1</p> <p>The land begins to recover. Grasses and weeds are the first to arrive and grow in the gray, ashy soil. You can still see the stumps of the burned trees, as the charred branches have fallen and rotted away. Without tree cover, the area gets full sunlight, which makes the grass and weeds grow very fast.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p>The grass and weeds continue to grow, but annual wild flowers are also beginning to appear. With them come the insects, such as butterflies, and the hills begin to look green again.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">3</p> <p>After many growing and dying seasons of annual grasses, weeds, and flowers, the soil becomes richer. Tall perennial flowers now begin to migrate into the area. Small animals and larger insects are using the area more often, and some also take up residence here.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">2</p> <p>Many years have passed, and the soil is now rich enough to support shrubs, small fast-growing trees, along with larger and more fire resilient trees. Birds and other small animals return to the area. Some of the grasses, weeds, and flowers die because the trees and shrubs block the sun from reaching them.</p>