



Name: _____

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LIFE HISTORY OF A STRANGE TREE: THE STRANGLER FIG

When you study a plant named the “strangler fig”, you know you’re in for a fascinating story! Strangler figs are plants that are integral to the cloud forest system. After you complete this activity you will know what a strangler fig looks like, how it got its name, and the major stages of its life cycle.

Part 1: Life cycle ideas

Work with your partner to read through the set of strangler fig life cycle cards. Spread the cards out on your desk then try to put them in order from the start of the plant’s life into its adulthood. When you and your partner have agreed on the order of the life cycle stages, write them in order below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____



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Now meet with another pair of students to compare your life cycle sequences. If you disagree on where to put a step, allow each side to share their perspective and reasoning. You might decide to change your mind about the position of one or more of your cards. If so, please change it/them.

When your group of four is done discussing and rearranging, answer the following questions.

(1) Were there any stages that you could not agree upon? If so, which ones?

(2) Choose one of the stages about which you and the other team did not agree.

(a) Explain your reasoning for placing it where you did.

(b) Explain the other team's reasoning for placing it where they did.



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(c) Explain how you came to a resolution about this stage (e.g., Were you convinced of their argument? Did you agree to disagree?)

Part 2: Life cycle facts

Visit *Canopy in the Clouds* to watch a short video about strangler figs. Select “Media”, then choose the “Strangler Figs” video from the videos list. Pay close attention to the life cycle details so that you can compare them to the sequence you made in Part 1.

(1) Did you hear or see anything in this video that made you think you should rearrange any of your steps from Part 1? If so, what?

(2) The scientist in the video mentions that the strangler fig starts out in the canopy. What name does he use to describe plants that live in the canopy?

(3) Strangler figs are classified as hemi-epiphytes. The prefix “hemi” means half or partial. Use your knowledge of this prefix as well as your knowledge of the life cycle of the strangler fig to create a definition of “hemi-epiphyte”.

My definition: _____



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(4) Now use the Canopy in the Clouds glossary (found under the “Learn” tab) to look up hemi-epiphyte. Write that definition below.

Glossary definition: _____

(5) In the video you watched the scientist climb the strangler fig from the inside, where the host tree used to live. What is this central stalk of the strangler fig made of? Are those still roots? Is it a trunk? Branches? A combination of plant structures? Explain your idea on the lines below.



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Part 3: Revised life cycle

Use the lines below to record the *correct* sequence of events in the life history of a strangler fig.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____