



WEEK
3

GROSS-OLGY

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME SMELLY, ICKY, GROSS FUN?

Have you ever encountered something that smelled, looked, felt or tasted gross? There is a good reason! We can have a negative reaction to gross things to help protect ourselves from things that may be bad to eat or touch. However, that doesn't mean they are all bad. There are many things we might consider gross—from mold and bugs to germs and scat, but they are all an important part of our world! Mold might smell and look gross and bugs, like flies, might give us that creepy crawly feeling, but both are important decomposers. Decomposers break down waste and dead things, and put those nutrients into the soil so that plants and other living things can survive and grow. Germs can make us feel sick, but there are kinds of good bacteria that help animals and humans digest food or even provide them with vitamins. Scat may smell stinky and look mushy or slimy, but it can help fertilize plants and can tell scientists about what animals might eat, their health and where they have been.

DAY 2:

THE GREAT GROSS OUTDOORS

From the smelly droppings of animals to slimy algae growing in a pond, nature has plenty of things you might consider gross! Decomposers, like maggots and fungi, break down dead plants and animals and cause them to rot. This can smell and look gross, but it is an important job that returns nutrients to the soil. Animals like skunks use stinky spray to protect themselves from predators, while some plants use stinky smells to attract insects to them. Frogs have slimy skin to help them breathe and slugs use slime to help them move. While certain things may be gross to us, they all have a role to play in an ecosystem. Let's see what great and gross things we can find!

Before you start, you should have:

- A place outside where you can explore
- A journal or paper
- Pencil, pen or crayons



Sam Noble Home



STEM
Activities

Get started:

- 1) Go explore in or around your house, neighborhood or a natural area.
- 2) Check off each “gross” thing when you find it. Make sure not to touch anything!

Fungus (mushrooms, mold, etc.)	Something slimy	A smell you don't like	Something dead
Something you've never seen before	A decomposer (something that eats dead, decaying things)	Something fuzzy	Trash
A fly	Something dirty	Something that's decomposing	Scat/ droppings
Something squishy	Something that slithers	Something with more than four legs	A worm

- 3) Tell someone about what you found!

Keep Exploring!

- Pick one gross thing you found and think: what job or role does it have in its ecosystem? Does it help dead things decompose, help something survive or maybe serve as food for something else? Draw a picture or write about it!
- Think about the things you do every day. Are there any things you do that might be considered “gross?” Draw a picture or write about it!

What did you find?

What did you discover? Upload a photo or video and tag the Sam Noble Museum on Instagram or Facebook. You can also use the hashtags **#samnoblemuseum** and **#summerexplorers** to share!

More information

<https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/news-events/big-features/scattergories-the-scoop-on-animal-poop>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uB61rfeeAsM>



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educators as
they head
outside to
explore the
Great Gross
Outdoors!**

<https://youtu.be/FDuRBEhbpf>

