



WEEK 3:

GROSS-ODOGY

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 3:

MEET A SCIENTIST

Meet Dr. Nick Czaplewski, a curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Sam Noble Museum! Dr. Czaplewski enjoys exploring all sorts of outdoor spaces to discover what kinds of living things can be found and how they interact in their environments. He will take us out into the field to explore about how “gross” things in nature are important for healthy ecosystems and help organisms to survive.

In this video, we will explore:

- What role decomposers and decomposition play in ecosystems
- How humans can use animal scat to learn about an area
- How animals use scent to locate food and communicate with one another
- The roles humans play in “gross” science



<https://youtu.be/Xr86gvJxZY8>