MS-LS1-1 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-1. Conduct an investigation to provide evidence that living things are made of cells; either one cell or many different numbers and types of cells. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on developing evidence that living things are made of cells, distinguishing between living and non-living things, and understanding that living things may be made of one cell or many and varied cells.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Planning and Carrying Out Investigations

Planning and carrying out investigations in 6-8 builds on K-5 experiences and progresses to include investigations that use multiple variables and provide evidence to support explanations or solutions.

- Conduct an investigation to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence that meet the goals of an investigation.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS1.A: Structure and Function

- All living things are made up of cells, which is the smallest unit that can be said to be alive. An organism may consist of one single cell (unicellular) or many different numbers and types of cells (multicellular).

Crosscutting Concepts

Scale, Proportion, and Quantity

- Phenomena that can be observed at one scale may not be observable at another scale.

- -

Connections to Engineering, Technology and Applications of Science

Interdependence of Science, Engineering, and Technology

- Engineering advances have led to important discoveries in virtually every field of science, and scientific discoveries have led to the development of entire industries and engineered systems.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:

1	Identifying the phenomenon under investigation		
	a	From the given investigation plan, students identify and describe* the phenomenon under investigation, which includes the idea that living things are made up of cells.	
	b	Students identify and describe* the purpose of the investigation, which includes providing evidence for the following ideas: that all living things are made of cells (either one cell or many different numbers and types of cells) and that the cell is the smallest unit that can be said to be alive.	
2	Identifying the evidence to address the purpose of the investigation		
	a	From the given investigation plan, students describe* the data that will be collected and the evidence to be derived from the data, including:	
		i.	The presence or absence of cells in living and nonliving things.
		ii.	The presence or absence of any part of a living thing that is not made up of cells.
		iii.	The presence or absence of cells in a variety of organisms, including unicellular and multicellular organisms.
		iv.	Different types of cells within one multicellular organism.
	b	Students describe* how the evidence collected will be relevant to the purpose of the investigation.	
3	Planning the investigation		
	a	From the given investigation plan, students describe* how the tools and methods included in the experimental design will provide the evidence necessary to address the purpose of the investigation, including that due to their small-scale size, cells are unable to be seen with the unaided eye and require engineered magnification devices to be seen.	
	b	Students describe* how the tools used in the investigation are an example of how science depends on engineering advances.	
4	Collecting the data		
	a	According to the given investigation plan, students collect and record data on the cellular composition of living organisms.	

	b	Students identify the tools used for observation at different magnifications and describe* that different tools are required to observe phenomena related to cells at different scales.
	c	Students evaluate the data they collect to determine whether the resulting evidence meets the goals of the investigation, including cellular composition as a distinguishing feature of living things.

MS-LS1-2 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-2. **Develop and use a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on the cell functioning as a whole system and the primary role of identified parts of the cell, specifically the nucleus, chloroplasts, mitochondria, cell membrane, and cell wall.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment of organelle structure/function relationships is limited to the cell wall and cell membrane. Assessment of the function of the other organelles is limited to their relationship to the whole cell. Assessment does not include the biochemical function of cells or cell parts.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems. • Develop and use a model to describe phenomena.	**LS1.A: Structure and Function** • Within cells, special structures are responsible for particular functions, and the cell membrane forms the boundary that controls what enters and leaves the cell.	**Structure and Function** • Complex and microscopic structures and systems can be visualized, modeled, and used to describe how their function depends on the relationships among its parts, therefore complex natural structures/systems can be analyzed to determine how they function.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Components of the model		
	a	To make sense of a phenomenon, students develop a model in which they identify the parts (i.e., components; e.g., nucleus, chloroplasts, cell wall, mitochondria, cell membrane, the function of a cell as a whole) of cells relevant for the given phenomenon.	
2	Relationships		
	a	In the model, students describe* the relationships between components, including:	
		i.	The particular functions of parts of cells in terms of their contributions to overall cellular functions (e.g., chloroplasts' involvement in photosynthesis and energy production, mitochondria's involvement in cellular respiration).
		ii.	The structure of the cell membrane or cell wall and its relationship to the function of the organelles and the whole cell.
3	Connections		
	a	Students use the model to describe* a causal account for the phenomenon, including how different parts of a cell contribute to how the cell functions as a whole, both separately and together with other structures. Students include how components, separately and together, contribute to:	
		i.	Maintaining a cell's internal processes, for which it needs energy.
		ii.	Maintaining the structure of the cell and controlling what enters and leaves the cell.
		iii.	Functioning together as parts of a system that determines cellular function.
	b	Students use the model to identify key differences between plant and animal cells based on structure and function, including:	
		i.	Plant cells have a cell wall in addition to a cell membrane, whereas animal cells have only a cell membrane. Plants use cell walls to provide structure to the plant.
		ii.	Plant cells contain organelles called chloroplasts, while animal cells do not. Chloroplasts allow plants to make the food they need to live using photosynthesis.

MS-LS1-3 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-3. **Use argument supported by evidence for how the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on the conceptual understanding that cells form tissues and tissues form organs specialized for particular body functions. Examples could include the interaction of subsystems within a system and the normal functioning of those systems.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the mechanism of one body system independent of others. Assessment is limited to the circulatory, excretory, digestive, respiratory, muscular, and nervous systems.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Engaging in Argument from Evidence
Engaging in argument from evidence in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to constructing a convincing argument that supports or refutes claims for either explanations or solutions about the natural and designed world(s).

- Use an oral and written argument supported by evidence to support or refute an explanation or a model for a phenomenon.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS1.A: Structure and Function

- In multicellular organisms, the body is a system of multiple interacting subsystems. These subsystems are groups of cells that work together to form tissues and organs that are specialized for particular body functions.

Crosscutting Concepts

Systems and System Models

- Systems may interact with other systems; they may have sub-systems and be a part of larger complex systems.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Science is a Human Endeavor

- Scientists and engineers are guided by habits of mind such as intellectual honesty, tolerance of ambiguity, skepticism, and openness to new ideas.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Supported claims		
	a	Students make a claim to be supported, related to a given explanation or model of a phenomenon. In the claim, students include the idea that the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells.	
2	Identifying scientific evidence		
	a	Students identify and describe* the given evidence that supports the claim (e.g., evidence from data and scientific literature), including evidence that:	
		i.	Specialized groups of cells work together to form tissues (e.g., evidence from data about the kinds of cells found in different tissues, such as nervous, muscular, and epithelial, and their functions).
		ii.	Specialized tissues comprise each organ, enabling the specific organ functions to be carried out (e.g., the heart contains muscle, connective, and epithelial tissues that allow the heart to receive and pump blood).
		iii.	Different organs can work together as subsystems to form organ systems that carry out complex functions (e.g., the heart and blood vessels work together as the circulatory system to transport blood and materials throughout the body).
		iv.	The body contains organs and organ systems that interact with each other to carry out all necessary functions for survival and growth of the organism (e.g., the digestive, respiratory, and circulatory systems are involved in the breakdown and transport of food and the transport of oxygen throughout the body to cells, where the molecules can be used for energy, growth, and repair).
3	Evaluating and critiquing the evidence		
	a	Students evaluate the evidence and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence, including:	
		i.	Types of sources.

		ii. Sufficiency, including validity and reliability, of the evidence to make and defend the claim.
		iii. Any alternative interpretations of the evidence and why the evidence supports the student's claim, as opposed to any other claims.
4	Reasoning and synthesis	
	a	Students use reasoning to connect the appropriate evidence to the claim. Students describe* the following chain of reasoning in their argumentation:
		i. Every scale (e.g., cells, tissues, organs, organ systems) of body function is composed of systems of interacting components.
		ii. Organs are composed of interacting tissues. Each tissue is made up of specialized cells. These interactions at the cellular and tissue levels enable the organs to carry out specific functions.
		iii. A body is a system of specialized organs that interact with each other and their subsystems to carry out the functions necessary for life.
	b	Students use oral or written arguments to support or refute an explanation or model of a phenomenon.

MS-LS1-4 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-4. Use argument based on empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support an explanation for how characteristic animal behaviors and specialized plant structures affect the probability of successful reproduction of animals and plants respectively. [Clarification Statement: Examples of behaviors that affect the probability of animal reproduction could include nest building to protect young from cold, herding of animals to protect young from predators, and vocalization of animals and colorful plumage to attract mates for breeding. Examples of animal behaviors that affect the probability of plant reproduction could include transferring pollen or seeds, and creating conditions for seed germination and growth. Examples of plant structures could include bright flowers attracting butterflies that transfer pollen, flower nectar and odors that attract insects that transfer pollen, and hard shells on nuts that squirrels bury.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Engaging in Argument from Evidence Engaging in argument from evidence in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to constructing a convincing argument that supports or refutes claims for either explanations or solutions about the natural and designed world(s). • Use an oral and written argument supported by empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support or refute an explanation or a model for a phenomenon or a solution to a problem.	**LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms** • Animals engage in characteristic behaviors that increase the odds of reproduction. • Plants reproduce in a variety of ways, sometimes depending on animal behavior and specialized features for reproduction.	**Cause and Effect** • Phenomena may have more than one cause, and some cause and effect relationships in systems can only be described using probability.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Supported claims		
	a	Students make a claim to support a given explanation of a phenomenon. In their claim, students include the idea that characteristic animal behaviors and specialized plant structures affect the probability of successful reproduction of animals and plants respectively.	
2	Identifying scientific evidence		
	a	Students identify the given evidence that supports the claim (e.g., evidence from data and scientific literature), including:	
		i.	Characteristic animal behaviors that increase the probability of reproduction.
		ii.	Specialized plant and animal structures that increase the probability of reproduction.
		iii.	Cause-and-effect relationships between:
			1. Specialized plant structures and the probability of successful reproduction of plants that have those structures.
			2. Animal behaviors and the probability of successful reproduction of animals that exhibit those behaviors.
			3. Plant reproduction and the animal behaviors related to plant reproduction.
3	Evaluating and critiquing the evidence		
	a	Students evaluate the evidence and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used to support the claim, including:	
		i.	Validity and reliability of sources.
		ii.	Sufficiency — including relevance, validity, and reliability — of the evidence to make and defend the claim.
		iii.	Alternative interpretations of the evidence and why the evidence supports the student's claim, as opposed to any other claims.

4	Reasoning and synthesis		
	a	Students use reasoning to connect the appropriate evidence to the claim, using oral or written arguments. Students describe* the following chain of reasoning in their argumentation:	
		i.	Many characteristic animal behaviors affect the likelihood of successful reproduction.
		ii.	Many specialized plant structures affect the likelihood of successful reproduction.
		iii.	Sometimes, animal behavior plays a role in the likelihood of successful reproduction in plants.
		iv.	Because successful reproduction has several causes and contributing factors, the cause-and-effect relationships between any of these characteristics, separately or together, and reproductive likelihood can be accurately reflected only in terms of probability.

MS-LS1-5 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-5. Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms. [Clarification Statement: Examples of local environmental conditions could include availability of food, light, space, and water. Examples of genetic factors could include large breed cattle and species of grass affecting growth of organisms. Examples of evidence could include drought decreasing plant growth, fertilizer increasing plant growth, different varieties of plant seeds growing at different rates in different conditions, and fish growing larger in large ponds than they do in small ponds.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include genetic mechanisms, gene regulation, or biochemical processes.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions

Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations and designing solutions supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific knowledge, principles, and theories.

- Construct a scientific explanation based on valid and reliable evidence obtained from sources (including the students' own experiments) and the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms

- Genetic factors as well as local conditions affect the growth of the adult plant.

Crosscutting Concepts

Cause and Effect

- Phenomena may have more than one cause, and some cause and effect relationships in systems can only be described using probability.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:		
1	Articulating the explanation of phenomena	
	a	Students articulate a statement that relates the given phenomenon to a scientific idea, including the idea that both environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms.
	b	Students use evidence and reasoning to construct a scientific explanation for the given phenomenon.
2	Evidence	
	a	Students identify and describe* evidence (e.g., from students' own investigations, observations, reading material, archived data) necessary for constructing the explanation, including:
		i. Environmental factors (e.g., availability of light, space, water; size of habitat) and that they can influence growth.
		ii. Genetic factors (e.g., specific breeds of plants and animals and their typical sizes) and that they can influence growth.
		iii. Changes in the growth of organisms as specific environmental and genetic factors change.
	b	Students use multiple valid and reliable sources of evidence to construct the explanation.
3	Reasoning	
	a	Students use reasoning, along with the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future, to connect the evidence and support an explanation for a phenomenon involving genetic and environmental influences on organism growth. Students describe* their chain of reasoning that includes:
		i. Organism growth is influenced by multiple environmental (e.g., drought, changes in food availability) and genetic (e.g., specific breed) factors.

		ii.	Because both environmental and genetic factors can influence organisms simultaneously, organism growth is the result of environmental and genetic factors working together (e.g., water availability influences how tall dwarf fruit trees will grow).
		iii.	Because organism growth can have several genetic and environmental causes, the contributions of specific causes or factors to organism growth can be described only using probability (e.g., not every fish in a large pond grows to the same size).

MS-LS1-6 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-6. Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for the role of photosynthesis in the cycling of matter and flow of energy into and out of organisms. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on tracing movement of matter and flow of energy.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the biochemical mechanisms of photosynthesis.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions

Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations and designing solutions supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific knowledge, principles, and theories.

- Construct a scientific explanation based on valid and reliable evidence obtained from sources (including the students' own experiments) and the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence

- Science knowledge is based upon logical connections between evidence and explanations.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms

- Plants, algae (including phytoplankton), and many microorganisms use the energy from light to make sugars (food) from carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and water through the process of photosynthesis, which also releases oxygen. These sugars can be used immediately or stored for growth or later use.

PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes and Everyday Life

- The chemical reaction by which plants produce complex food molecules (sugars) requires an energy input (i.e., from sunlight) to occur. In this reaction, carbon dioxide and water combine to form carbon-based organic molecules and release oxygen. *(secondary)*

Crosscutting Concepts

Energy and Matter

- Within a natural system, the transfer of energy drives the motion and/or cycling of matter.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:		
1	Articulating the explanation of phenomena	
	a	Students articulate a statement that relates the given phenomenon to a scientific idea, including the idea that photosynthesis results in the cycling of matter and energy into and out of organisms.
	b	Students use evidence and reasoning to construct a scientific explanation for the given phenomenon.
2	Evidence	
	a	Students identify and describe* evidence (e.g., from students' own investigations, observations, reading material, archived data) necessary to constructing the explanation, including that:
		i. Plants, algae, and photosynthetic microorganisms require energy (in the form of sunlight) and must take in carbon dioxide and water to survive.
		ii. Energy from sunlight is used to combine simple nonfood molecules (e.g., carbon dioxide and water) into food molecules (e.g., sugar) and oxygen, which can be used immediately or stored by the plant.
		iii. Animals take in food and oxygen to provide energy and materials for growth and survival.
		iv. Some animals eat plants, algae, and photosynthetic microorganisms, and some animals eat other animals, which have themselves eaten photosynthetic organisms.
	b	Students use multiple valid and reliable sources of evidence.

3	Reasoning	
	a	Students use reasoning, along with the assumption that theories and laws that describe the natural world operate today as they did in the past and will continue to do so in the future, to connect the evidence and support an explanation for energy and matter cycling during photosynthesis. Students describe* a chain of reasoning for their explanation, including:
		i. Plants, algae, and photosynthetic microorganisms take in matter (in the form of carbon dioxide and water) and use energy from the sun to produce carbon-based organic molecules (food), which they can use immediately or store, and release oxygen into the environment through photosynthesis.
		ii. Plants use the food they have made for energy, growth, and other necessary functions (e.g., repair, seed production).
		iii. Animals depend on matter from plants for growth and survival, including:
		1. Eating photosynthetic organisms (or other organisms that have eaten photosynthetic organisms), thus acquiring the matter they contain, the production of which was driven by photosynthesis.
		2. Breathing in oxygen, which was released when plants used energy to rearrange carbon dioxide and water during photosynthesis.
		iv. Because animals acquire their food from photosynthetic organisms (or from other animals that have eaten those organisms) and their oxygen from the products of photosynthesis, all food and most of the oxygen animals use for life processes are the results of energy from the sun driving matter flows through the process of photosynthesis.
		v. The process of photosynthesis has an important role in energy and matter cycling within plants (i.e., the conversion of carbon dioxide and water into complex carbon-based molecules (sugars) and oxygen, the contribution of sugars to plant growth and internal processes) as well as from plants to other organisms.

MS-LS1-7 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-7. **Develop a model to describe how food is rearranged through chemical reactions forming new molecules that support growth and/or release energy as this matter moves through an organism.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on describing that molecules are broken apart and put back together and that in this process, energy is released.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include details of the chemical reactions for photosynthesis or respiration.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems. • Develop a model to describe unobservable mechanisms.	**LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms** • Within individual organisms, food moves through a series of chemical reactions in which it is broken down and rearranged to form new molecules, to support growth, or to release energy. **PS3.D: Energy in Chemical Processes and Everyday Life** • Cellular respiration in plants and animals involve chemical reactions with oxygen that release stored energy. In these processes, complex molecules containing carbon react with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide and other materials. *(secondary)*	**Energy and Matter** • Matter is conserved because atoms are conserved in physical and chemical processes.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Components of the model		
	a	To make sense of a phenomenon, students develop a model in which they identify the relevant components for describing* how food molecules are rearranged as matter moves through an organism, including:	
		i.	Molecules of food, which are complex carbon-containing molecules.
		ii.	Oxygen.
		iii.	Energy that is released or absorbed during chemical reactions between food and oxygen.
		iv.	New types of molecules produced through chemical reactions involving food.
2	Relationships		
	a	In the model, students identify and describe* the relationships between components, including:	
		i.	During cellular respiration, molecules of food undergo chemical reactions with oxygen, releasing stored energy.
		ii.	The atoms in food are rearranged through chemical reactions to form new molecules.
3	Connections		
	a	Students use the model to describe*:	
		i.	The number of each type of atom being the same before and after chemical reactions, indicating that the matter ingested as food is conserved as it moves through an organism to support growth.
		ii.	That all matter (atoms) used by the organism for growth comes from the products of the chemical reactions involving the matter taken in by the organism.
		iii.	Food molecules taken in by the organism are broken down and can then be rearranged to become the molecules that comprise the organism (e.g., the proteins and other molecules in a hamburger can be broken down and used to make a variety of tissues in humans).
		iv.	As food molecules are rearranged, energy is released and can be used to support other processes within the organism.

MS-LS1-8 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS1-8. **Gather and synthesize information that sensory receptors respond to stimuli by sending messages to the brain for immediate behavior or storage as memories.** [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include mechanisms for the transmission of this information.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information in 6-8 builds on K-5 experiences and progresses to evaluating the merit and validity of ideas and methods. • Gather, read, and synthesize information from multiple appropriate sources and assess the credibility, accuracy, and possible bias of each publication and methods used, and describe how they are supported or not supported by evidence.	**LS1.D: Information Processing** • Each sense receptor responds to different inputs (electromagnetic, mechanical, chemical), transmitting them as signals that travel along nerve cells to the brain. The signals are then processed in the brain, resulting in immediate behaviors or memories.	**Cause and Effect** • Cause and effect relationships may be used to predict phenomena in natural systems.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Obtaining information		
	a	Students gather and synthesize information from at least two sources (e.g., text, media, visual displays, data) about a phenomenon that includes the relationship between sensory receptors and the storage and usage of sensory information by organisms. Students gather information about:	
		i.	Different types of sensory receptors and the types of inputs to which they respond (e.g., electromagnetic, mechanical, chemical stimuli).
		ii.	Sensory information transmission along nerve cells from receptors to the brain.
		iii.	Sensory information processing by the brain as:
			1. Memories (i.e., stored information).
			2. Immediate behavioral responses (i.e., immediate use).
	b	Students gather sufficient information to provide evidence that illustrates the causal relationships between information received by sensory receptors and behavior, both immediate and over longer time scales (e.g., a loud noise processed via auditory receptors may cause an animal to startle immediately or may be encoded as a memory, which can later be used to help the animal react appropriately in similar situations).	
2	Evaluating information		
	a	Students evaluate the information based on:	
		i.	The credibility, accuracy, and possible bias of each publication and the methods used to generate and collect the evidence.
		ii.	The ability of the information to provide evidence that supports or does not support the idea that sensory receptors send signals to the brain, resulting in immediate behavioral changes or stored memories.
		iii.	Whether the information is sufficient to allow prediction of the response of an organism to different stimuli based on cause and effect relationships between the responses of sensory receptors and behavioral responses.

MS-LS2-1 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS2-1. Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on cause and effect relationships between resources and growth of individual organisms and the numbers of organisms in ecosystems during periods of abundant and scarce resources.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Analyzing data in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to extending quantitative analysis to investigations, distinguishing between correlation and causation, and basic statistical techniques of data and error analysis.

- Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for phenomena.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

- Organisms, and populations of organisms, are dependent on their environmental interactions both with other living things and with nonliving factors.
- In any ecosystem, organisms and populations with similar requirements for food, water, oxygen, or other resources may compete with each other for limited resources, access to which consequently constrains their growth and reproduction.
- Growth of organisms and population increases are limited by access to resources.

Crosscutting Concepts

Cause and Effect

- Cause and effect relationships may be used to predict phenomena in natural or designed systems.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Organizing data		
	a	Students organize the given data (e.g., using tables, graphs, and charts) to allow for analysis and interpretation of relationships between resource availability and organisms in an ecosystem, including:	
		i.	Populations (e.g., sizes, reproduction rates, growth information) of organisms as a function of resource availability.
		ii.	Growth of individual organisms as a function of resource availability.
2	Identifying relationships		
	a	Students analyze the organized data to determine the relationships between the size of a population, the growth and survival of individual organisms, and resource availability.	
	b	Students determine whether the relationships provide evidence of a causal link between these factors.	
3	Interpreting data		
	a	Students analyze and interpret the organized data to make predictions based on evidence of causal relationships between resource availability, organisms, and organism populations. Students make relevant predictions, including:	
		i.	Changes in the amount and availability of a given resource (e.g., less food) may result in changes in the population of an organism (e.g., less food results in fewer organisms).
		ii.	Changes in the amount or availability of a resource (e.g., more food) may result in changes in the growth of individual organisms (e.g., more food results in faster growth).
		iii.	Resource availability drives competition among organisms, both within a population as well as between populations.
		iv.	Resource availability may have effects on a population's rate of reproduction.

MS-LS2-2 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS2-2. **Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on predicting consistent patterns of interactions in different ecosystems in terms of the relationships among and between organisms and abiotic components of ecosystems. Examples of types of interactions could include competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations and designing solutions supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific ideas, principles, and theories. • Construct an explanation that includes qualitative or quantitative relationships between variables that predict phenomena.	**LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems** • Similarly, predatory interactions may reduce the number of organisms or eliminate whole populations of organisms. Mutually beneficial interactions, in contrast, may become so interdependent that each organism requires the other for survival. Although the species involved in these competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial interactions vary across ecosystems, the patterns of interactions of organisms with their environments, both living and nonliving, are shared.	**Patterns** • Patterns can be used to identify cause and effect relationships.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Articulating the explanation of phenomena		
	a	Students articulate a statement that relates the given phenomenon to a scientific idea, including that similar patterns of interactions occur between organisms and their environment, regardless of the ecosystem or the species involved.	
	b	Students use evidence and reasoning to construct an explanation for the given phenomenon.	
2	Evidence		
	a	Students identify and describe* the evidence (e.g., from students' own investigations, observations, reading material, archived data) necessary for constructing the explanation, including evidence that:	
		i.	Competitive relationships occur when organisms within an ecosystem compete for shared resources (e.g., data about the change in population of a given species when a competing species is introduced).
		ii.	Predatory interactions occur between organisms within an ecosystem.
		iii.	Mutually beneficial interactions occur between organisms within an ecosystem. Organisms involved in these mutually beneficial interactions can become so dependent upon one another that they cannot survive alone.
		iv.	Resource availability, or lack thereof, can affect interactions between organisms (e.g., organisms in a resource-limited environment may have a competitive relationship, while those same organisms may not be in competition in a resource-rich environment).
		v.	Competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial interactions occur across multiple, different, ecosystems
	b	Students use multiple valid and reliable sources for the evidence.	
3	Reasoning		
	a	Students identify and describe* quantitative or qualitative patterns of interactions among organisms that can be used to identify causal relationships within ecosystems, related to the given phenomenon.	

	b	Students describe* that regardless of the ecosystem or species involved, the patterns of interactions (competitive, mutually beneficial, predator/prey) are similar.
	c	Students use reasoning to connect the evidence and support an explanation. In their reasoning, students use patterns in the evidence to predict common interactions among organisms in ecosystems as they relate to the phenomenon, (e.g., given specific organisms in a given environment with specified resource availability, which organisms in the system will exhibit competitive interactions). Students predict the following types of interactions:
		i. Predatory interactions.
		ii. Competitive interactions.
		iii. Mutually beneficial interactions.

MS-LS2-3 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS2-3. Develop a model to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on describing the conservation of matter and flow of energy into and out of various ecosystems, and on defining the boundaries of the system.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the use of chemical reactions to describe the processes.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Developing and Using Models

Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems.

- Develop a model to describe phenomena.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS2.B: Cycle of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems

- Food webs are models that demonstrate how matter and energy is transferred between producers, consumers, and decomposers as the three groups interact within an ecosystem. Transfers of matter into and out of the physical environment occur at every level. Decomposers recycle nutrients from dead plant or animal matter back to the soil in terrestrial environments or to the water in aquatic environments. The atoms that make up the organisms in an ecosystem are cycled repeatedly between the living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem.

Crosscutting Concepts

Energy and Matter

- The transfer of energy can be tracked as energy flows through a natural system.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems

- Science assumes that objects and events in natural systems occur in consistent patterns that are understandable through measurement and observation.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Components of the model		
	a	To make sense of a given phenomenon, students develop a model in which they identify the relevant components, including:	
		i.	Organisms that can be classified as producers, consumers, and/or decomposers.
		ii.	Nonliving parts of an ecosystem (e.g., water, minerals, air) that can provide matter to living organisms or receive matter from living organisms.
		iii.	Energy
	b	Students define the boundaries of the ecosystem under consideration in their model (e.g., pond, part of a forest, meadow; a whole forest, which contains a meadow, pond, and stream).	
2	Relationships		
	a	In the model, students describe* relationships between components within the ecosystem, including:	
		i.	Energy transfer into and out of the system.
		ii.	Energy transfer and matter cycling (cycling of atoms):
			1. Among producers, consumers, and decomposers (e.g., decomposers break down consumers and producers via chemical reactions and use the energy released from rearranging those molecules for growth and development).
			2. Between organisms and the nonliving parts of the system (e.g., producers use matter from the nonliving parts of the ecosystem and energy from the sun to produce food from nonfood materials).
3	Connections		
	a	Students use the model to describe* the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of the defined system, including:	

		i.	When organisms consume other organisms, there is a transfer of energy and a cycling of atoms that were originally captured from the nonliving parts of the ecosystem by producers.
		ii.	The transfer of matter (atoms) and energy between living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem at every level within the system, which allows matter to cycle and energy to flow within and outside of the system.
	b	Students use the model to track energy transfer and matter cycling in the system based on consistent and measureable patterns, including:	
		i.	That the atoms that make up the organisms in an ecosystem are cycled repeatedly between the living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem.
		ii.	That matter and energy are conserved through transfers within and outside of the ecosystem.

MS-LS2-4 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS2-4. Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on recognizing patterns in data and making warranted inferences about changes in populations, and on evaluating empirical evidence supporting arguments about changes to ecosystems.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Engaging in Argument from Evidence
Engaging in argument from evidence in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to constructing a convincing argument that supports or refutes claims for either explanations or solutions about the natural and designed world(s).

- Construct an oral and written argument supported by empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support or refute an explanation or a model for a phenomenon or a solution to a problem.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence

- Science disciplines share common rules of obtaining and evaluating empirical evidence.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience

- Ecosystems are dynamic in nature; their characteristics can vary over time. Disruptions to any physical or biological component of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all its populations.

Crosscutting Concepts

Stability and Change

- Small changes in one part of a system might cause large changes in another part.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Supported claims		
	a	Students make a claim to be supported about a given explanation or model for a phenomenon. In their claim, students include the idea that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem can affect the populations living there.	
2	Identifying scientific evidence		
	a	Students identify and describe* the given evidence (e.g., evidence from data, scientific literature) needed for supporting the claim, including evidence about:	
		i.	Changes in the physical or biological components of an ecosystem, including the magnitude of the changes (e.g., data about rainfall, fires, predator removal, species introduction).
		ii.	Changes in the populations of an ecosystem, including the magnitude of the changes (e.g., changes in population size, types of species present, and relative prevalence of a species within the ecosystem).
		iii.	Evidence of causal and correlational relationships between changes in the components of an ecosystem with the changes in populations.
	b	Students use multiple valid and reliable sources of evidence.	
3	Evaluating and critiquing the evidence		
	a	Students evaluate the given evidence, identifying the necessary and sufficient evidence for supporting the claim.	
	b	Students identify alternative interpretations of the evidence and describe* why the evidence supports the student's claim.	
4	Reasoning and synthesis		
	a	Students use reasoning to connect the appropriate evidence to the claim and construct an oral or written argument about the causal relationship between physical and biological components of an	

		ecosystem and changes in organism populations, based on patterns in the evidence. In the argument, students describe* a chain of reasoning that includes:
		i. Specific changes in the physical or biological components of an ecosystem cause changes that can affect the survival and reproductive likelihood of organisms within that ecosystem (e.g., scarcity of food or the elimination of a predator will alter the survival and reproductive probability of some organisms).
		ii. Factors that affect the survival and reproduction of organisms can cause changes in the populations of those organisms.
		iii. Patterns in the evidence suggest that many different types of changes (e.g., changes in multiple types of physical and biological components) are correlated with changes in organism populations.
		iv. Several consistent correlational patterns, along with the understanding of specific causal relationships between changes in the components of an ecosystem and changes in the survival and reproduction of organisms, suggest that many changes in physical or biological components of ecosystems can cause changes in populations of organisms.
		v. Some small changes in physical or biological components of an ecosystem are associated with large changes in a population, suggesting that small changes in one component of an ecosystem can cause large changes in another component.

MS-LS2-5 Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS2-5. Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.* [Clarification Statement: Examples of ecosystem services could include water purification, nutrient recycling, and prevention of soil erosion. Examples of design solution constraints could include scientific, economic, and social considerations.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Engaging in Argument from Evidence
Engaging in argument from evidence in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to constructing a convincing argument that supports or refutes claims for either explanations or solutions about the natural and designed world(s).

- Evaluate competing design solutions based on jointly developed and agreed-upon design criteria.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience

- Biodiversity describes the variety of species found in Earth's terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems. The completeness or integrity of an ecosystem's biodiversity is often used as a measure of its health.

LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans

- Changes in biodiversity can influence humans' resources, such as food, energy, and medicines, as well as ecosystem services that humans rely on—for example, water purification and recycling. *(secondary)*

ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions

- There are systematic processes for evaluating solutions with respect to how well they meet the criteria and constraints of a problem. *(secondary)*

Crosscutting Concepts

Stability and Change

- Small changes in one part of a system might cause large changes in another part.

Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science

Influence of Science, Engineering, and Technology on Society and the Natural World

- The use of technologies and any limitations on their use are driven by individual or societal needs, desires, and values; by the findings of scientific research; and by differences in such factors as climate, natural resources, and economic conditions. Thus technology use varies from region to region and over time.

Connections to Nature of Science

Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World

- Scientific knowledge can describe the consequences of actions but does not necessarily prescribe the decisions that society takes.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Identifying the given design solution and supporting evidence		
	a	Students identify and describe*:	
		i.	The given competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.
		ii.	The given problem involving biodiversity and/or ecosystem services that is being solved by the given design solutions, including information about why biodiversity and/or ecosystem services are necessary to maintaining a healthy ecosystem.
		iii.	The given evidence about performance of the given design solutions.
2	Identifying any potential additional evidence that is relevant to the evaluation		
	a	Students identify and describe* the additional evidence (in the form of data, information, or other appropriate forms) that is relevant to the problem, design solutions, and evaluation of the solutions, including:	
		i.	The variety of species (biodiversity) found in the given ecosystem.
		ii.	Factors that affect the stability of the biodiversity of the given ecosystem.

		iii.	Ecosystem services (e.g., water purification, nutrient recycling, prevention of soil erosion) that affect the stability of the system.
	b	Students collaboratively define and describe* criteria and constraints for the evaluation of the design solution.	
3	Evaluating and critiquing the design solution		
	a	In their evaluations, students use scientific evidence to:	
		i.	Compare the ability of each of the competing design solutions to maintain ecosystem stability and biodiversity.
		ii.	Clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the competing designs with respect to each criterion and constraint (e.g., scientific, social, and economic considerations).
		iii.	Assess possible side effects of the given design solutions on other aspects of the ecosystem, including the possibility that a small change in one component of an ecosystem can produce a large change in another component of the ecosystem.

MS-LS3-1 Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS3-1. Develop and use a model to describe why structural changes to genes (mutations) located on chromosomes may affect proteins and may result in harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects to the structure and function of the organism.[Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on conceptual understanding that changes in genetic material may result in making different proteins.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include specific changes at the molecular level, mechanisms for protein synthesis, or specific types of mutations.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems. • Develop and use a model to describe phenomena.	**LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits** • Genes are located in the chromosomes of cells, with each chromosome pair containing two variants of each of many distinct genes. Each distinct gene chiefly controls the production of specific proteins, which in turn affects the traits of the individual. Changes (mutations) to genes can result in changes to proteins, which can affect the structures and functions of the organism and thereby change traits. **LS3.B: Variation of Traits** • In addition to variations that arise from sexual reproduction, genetic information can be altered because of mutations. Though rare, mutations may result in changes to the structure and function of proteins. Some changes are beneficial, others harmful, and some neutral to the organism.	**Structure and Function** • Complex and microscopic structures and systems can be visualized, modeled, and used to describe how their function depends on the shapes, composition, and relationships among its parts, therefore complex natural structures/systems can be analyzed to determine how they function.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Components of the model		
	a	Students develop a model in which they identify the relevant components for making sense of a given phenomenon involving the relationship between mutations and the effects on the organism, including:	
		i.	Genes, located on chromosomes.
		ii.	Proteins.
		iii.	Traits of organisms.
2	Relationships		
	a	In their model, students describe* the relationships between components, including:	
		i.	Every gene has a certain structure, which determines the structure of a specific set of proteins.
		ii.	Protein structure influences protein function (e.g., the structure of some blood proteins allows them to attach to oxygen, the structure of a normal digestive protein allows it break down particular food molecules).
		iii.	Observable organism traits (e.g., structural, functional, behavioral) result from the activity of proteins.
3	Connections		
	a	Students use the model to describe* that structural changes to genes (i.e., mutations) may result in observable effects at the level of the organism, including why structural changes to genes:	
		i.	May affect protein structure and function.

		ii. May affect how proteins contribute to observable structures and functions in organisms.
		iii. May result in trait changes that are beneficial, harmful, or neutral for the organism.
	b	Students use the model to describe* that beneficial, neutral, or harmful changes to protein function can cause beneficial, neutral, or harmful changes in the structure and function of organisms.

MS-LS3-2 Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS3-2. Develop and use a model to describe why asexual reproduction results in offspring with identical genetic information and sexual reproduction results in offspring with genetic variation. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using models such as Punnett squares, diagrams, and simulations to describe the cause and effect relationship of gene transmission from parent(s) to offspring and resulting genetic variation.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Developing and Using Models
Modeling in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to developing, using, and revising models to describe, test, and predict more abstract phenomena and design systems.

- Develop and use a model to describe phenomena.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms

- Organisms reproduce, either sexually or asexually, and transfer their genetic information to their offspring. *(secondary)*

LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits

- Variations of inherited traits between parent and offspring arise from genetic differences that result from the subset of chromosomes (and therefore genes) inherited.

LS3.B: Variation of Traits

- In sexually reproducing organisms, each parent contributes half of the genes acquired (at random) by the offspring. Individuals have two of each chromosome and hence two alleles of each gene, one acquired from each parent. These versions may be identical or may differ from each other.

Crosscutting Concepts

Cause and Effect

- Cause and effect relationships may be used to predict phenomena in natural systems.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:		
1	Components of the model	
	a	Students develop a model (e.g., Punnett squares, diagrams, simulations) for a given phenomenon involving the differences in genetic variation that arise from sexual and asexual reproduction. In the model, students identify and describe* the relevant components, including:
		i. Chromosome pairs, including genetic variants, in asexual reproduction:
		1. Parents.
		2. Offspring.
		ii. Chromosome pairs, including genetic variants, in sexual reproduction:
		1. Parents.
		2. Offspring.
2	Relationships	
	a	In their model, students describe* the relationships between components, including:
		i. During reproduction (both sexual and asexual), parents transfer genetic information in the form of genes to their offspring.
		ii. Under normal conditions, offspring have the same number of chromosomes, and therefore genes, as their parents.
		iii. During asexual reproduction, a single parent's chromosomes (one set) are the source of genetic material in the offspring.
		iv. During sexual reproduction, two parents (two sets of chromosomes) contribute genetic material to the offspring.

3	Connections	
	a	Students use the model to describe* a causal account for why sexual and asexual reproduction result in different amounts of genetic variation in offspring relative to their parents, including that:
		i. In asexual reproduction:
		1. Offspring have a single source of genetic information, and their chromosomes are complete copies of each single parent pair of chromosomes.
		2. Offspring chromosomes are identical to parent chromosomes.
		ii. In sexual reproduction:
		1. Offspring have two sources of genetic information (i.e., two sets of chromosomes) that contribute to each final pair of chromosomes in the offspring.
		2. Because both parents are likely to contribute different genetic information, offspring chromosomes reflect a combination of genetic material from two sources and therefore contain new combinations of genes (genetic variation) that make offspring chromosomes distinct from those of either parent.
	b	Students use cause-and-effect relationships found in the model between the type of reproduction and the resulting genetic variation to predict that more genetic variation occurs in organisms that reproduce sexually compared to organisms that reproduce asexually.

MS-LS4-1 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-1. Analyze and interpret data for patterns in the fossil record that document the existence, diversity, extinction, and change of life forms throughout the history of life on Earth under the assumption that natural laws operate today as in the past. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on finding patterns of changes in the level of complexity of anatomical structures in organisms and the chronological order of fossil appearance in the rock layers.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include the names of individual species or geological eras in the fossil record.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Analyzing and Interpreting Data
Analyzing data in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to extending quantitative analysis to investigations, distinguishing between correlation and causation, and basic statistical techniques of data and error analysis.

- Analyze and interpret data to determine similarities and differences in findings.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence

- Science knowledge is based upon logical and conceptual connections between evidence and explanations.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS4.A: Evidence of Common Ancestry and Diversity

- The collection of fossils and their placement in chronological order (e.g., through the location of the sedimentary layers in which they are found or through radioactive dating) is known as the fossil record. It documents the existence, diversity, extinction, and change of many life forms throughout the history of life on Earth.

Crosscutting Concepts

Patterns

- Graphs, charts, and images can be used to identify patterns in data.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems

- Science assumes that objects and events in natural systems occur in consistent patterns that are understandable through measurement and observation.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Organizing data		
	a	Students organize the given data (e.g., using tables, graphs, charts, images), including the appearance of specific types of fossilized organisms in the fossil record as a function of time, as determined by their locations in the sedimentary layers or the ages of rocks.	
	b	Students organize the data in a way that allows for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of similarities and differences in the data.	
2	Identifying relationships		
	a	Students identify:	
		i.	Patterns between any given set of sedimentary layers and the relative ages of those layers.
		ii.	The time period(s) during which a given fossil organism is present in the fossil record.
		iii.	Periods of time for which changes in the presence or absence of large numbers of organisms or specific types of organisms can be observed in the fossil record (e.g., a fossil layer with very few organisms immediately next to a fossil layer with many types of organisms).
		iv.	Patterns of changes in the level of complexity of anatomical structures in organisms in the fossil record, as a function of time.
3	Interpreting data		
	a	Students analyze and interpret the data to determine evidence for the existence, diversity, extinction, and change in life forms throughout the history of Earth, using the assumption that natural laws operate today as they would have in the past. Students use similarities and differences in the observed patterns to provide evidence for:	
		i.	When mass extinctions occurred.
		ii.	When organisms or types of organisms emerged, went extinct, or evolved.
		iii.	The long-term increase in the diversity and complexity of organisms on Earth.

MS-LS4-2 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-2. Apply scientific ideas to construct an explanation for the anatomical similarities and differences among modern organisms and between modern and fossil organisms to infer evolutionary relationships. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on explanations of the evolutionary relationships among organisms in terms of similarity or differences of the gross appearance of anatomical structures.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions

Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations and designing solutions supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific ideas, principles, and theories.

- Apply scientific ideas to construct an explanation for real-world phenomena, examples, or events.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS4.A: Evidence of Common Ancestry and Diversity

- Anatomical similarities and differences between various organisms living today and between them and organisms in the fossil record, enable the reconstruction of evolutionary history and the inference of lines of evolutionary descent.

Crosscutting Concepts

Patterns

- Patterns can be used to identify cause and effect relationships.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems

- Science assumes that objects and events in natural systems occur in consistent patterns that are understandable through measurement and observation.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Articulating the explanation of phenomena		
	a	Students articulate a statement that relates a given phenomenon to scientific ideas, including the following ideas about similarities and differences in organisms and their evolutionary relationships:	
		i.	Anatomical similarities and differences among organisms can be used to infer evolutionary relationships, including:
			1. Among modern organisms.
			2. Between modern and fossil organisms.
	b	Students use evidence and reasoning to construct an explanation for the given phenomenon.	
2	Evidence		
	a	Students identify and describe* evidence (e.g., from students' own investigations, observations, reading material, archived data, simulations) necessary for constructing the explanation, including similarities and differences in anatomical patterns in and between:	
		i.	Modern, living organisms (e.g., skulls of modern crocodiles, skeletons of birds; features of modern whales and elephants).
		ii.	Fossilized organisms (e.g., skulls of fossilized crocodiles, fossilized dinosaurs).
3	Reasoning		
	a	Students use reasoning to connect the evidence to support an explanation. Students describe* the following chain of reasoning for the explanation:	
		i.	Organisms that share a pattern of anatomical features are likely to be more closely related than are organisms that do not share a pattern of anatomical features, due to the cause-and-effect relationship between genetic makeup and anatomy (e.g., although birds and insects both have wings, the organisms are structurally very different and not very closely related; the wings of birds and bats are structurally similar, and the organisms are more closely related; the limbs of horses and zebras are structurally very similar, and they are more closely related than are birds and bats or birds and insects).
		ii.	Changes over time in the anatomical features observable in the fossil record can be used to infer lines of evolutionary descent by linking extinct organisms to living organisms through a series of fossilized organisms that share a basic set of anatomical features.

MS-LS4-3 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-3. **Analyze displays of pictorial data to compare patterns of similarities in the embryological development across multiple species to identify relationships not evident in the fully formed anatomy.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on inferring general patterns of relatedness among embryos of different organisms by comparing the macroscopic appearance of diagrams or pictures.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment of comparisons is limited to gross appearance of anatomical structures in embryological development.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Analyzing and Interpreting Data Analyzing data in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to extending quantitative analysis to investigations, distinguishing between correlation and causation, and basic statistical techniques of data and error analysis. • Analyze displays of data to identify linear and nonlinear relationships.	**LS4.A: Evidence of Common Ancestry and Diversity** • Comparison of the embryological development of different species also reveals similarities that show relationships not evident in the fully-formed anatomy.	**Patterns** • Graphs, charts, and images can be used to identify patterns in data.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Organizing data		
	a	Students organize the given displays of pictorial data of embryos by developmental stage and by organism (e.g., early, middle, just prior to birth) to allow for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of relationships in the data.	
2	Identifying relationships		
	a	Students analyze their organized pictorial displays to identify linear and nonlinear relationships, including:	
		i.	Patterns of similarities in embryos across species (e.g., early mammal embryos and early fish embryos both contain gill slits, whale embryos and the embryos of land animals — even some snakes — have hind limbs).
		ii.	Patterns of changes as embryos develop (e.g., mammal embryos lose their gill slits, but the gill slits develop into gills in fish).
3	Interpreting data		
	a	Students use patterns of similarities and changes in embryo development to describe* evidence for relatedness among apparently diverse species, including similarities that are not evident in the fully formed anatomy (e.g., mammals and fish are more closely related than they appear to be based on their adult features, whales are related to land animals).	

MS-LS4-4 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-4. Construct an explanation based on evidence that describes how genetic variations of traits in a population increase some individuals' probability of surviving and reproducing in a specific environment. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using simple probability statements and proportional reasoning to construct explanations.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations and designing solutions supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific ideas, principles, and theories. • Construct an explanation that includes qualitative or quantitative relationships between variables that describe phenomena.	**LS4.B: Natural Selection** • Natural selection leads to the predominance of certain traits in a population, and the suppression of others.	**Cause and Effect** • Phenomena may have more than one cause, and some cause and effect relationships in systems can only be described using probability.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:		
1	Articulating the explanation for phenomena	
	a	Students articulate a statement that relates the given phenomenon to scientific ideas about the cause-and-effect relationship between the inheritance of traits increasing the chances of successful reproduction and natural selection.
	b	Students use evidence and reasoning to construct an explanation for the given phenomenon.
2	Evidence	
	a	Students identify and describe* given evidence (e.g., from students' own investigations, observations, reading materials, archived data) necessary for constructing the explanation, including:
		i. Individuals in a species have genetic variation that can be passed on to their offspring.
		ii. The probability of a specific organism surviving and reproducing in a specific environment.
		iii. The traits (i.e., specific variations of a characteristic) and the cause-and-effect relationships between those traits and the probability of survival and reproduction of a given organism in a specific environment.
		iv. The particular genetic variations (associated with those traits) that are carried by that organism.
3	Reasoning	
	a	Students use reasoning to connect the evidence and support an explanation that describes* the relationship between genetic variation and the success of organisms in a specific environment. Students describe* a chain of reasoning that includes:
		i. Any population in a given environment contains a variety of available, inheritable genetic traits.
		ii. For a specific environment (e.g., different environments may have limited food availability, predators, nesting site availability, light availability), some traits confer advantages that make it more probable that an organism will be able to survive and reproduce there.
		iii. In a population, there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the variation of traits and the probability that specific organisms will be able to survive and reproduce.
		iv. Variation of traits is a result of genetic variations occurring in the population.
		v. The proportion of individual organisms that have genetic variations and traits that are advantageous in a particular environment will increase from generation to generation due to

			natural selection because the probability that those individuals will survive and reproduce is greater.
		vi.	Similarly, the proportion of individual organisms that have genetic variations and traits that are disadvantageous in a particular environment will be less likely to survive, and the disadvantageous traits will decrease from generation to generation due to natural selection.

MS-LS4-5 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-5. Gather and synthesize information about the technologies that have changed the way humans influence the inheritance of desired traits in organisms. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on synthesizing information from reliable sources about the influence of humans on genetic outcomes in artificial selection (such as genetic modification, animal husbandry, gene therapy); and, on the impacts these technologies have on society as well as the technologies leading to these scientific discoveries.]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices

Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information
Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to evaluating the merit and validity of ideas and methods.

- Gather, read, and synthesize information from multiple appropriate sources and assess the credibility, accuracy, and possible bias of each publication and methods used, and describe how they are supported or not supported by evidence.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

LS4.B: Natural Selection

- In *artificial* selection, humans have the capacity to influence certain characteristics of organisms by selective breeding. One can choose desired parental traits determined by genes, which are then passed on to offspring.

Crosscutting Concepts

Cause and Effect

- Phenomena may have more than one cause, and some cause and effect relationships in systems can only be described using probability.

- -

Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science

Interdependence of Science, Engineering, and Technology

- Engineering advances have led to important discoveries in virtually every field of science, and scientific discoveries have led to the development of entire industries and engineered systems.

- -

Connections to Nature of Science

Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World

- Scientific knowledge can describe the consequences of actions but does not necessarily prescribe the decisions that society takes.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:		
1	Obtaining information	
	a	Students gather information about at least two technologies that have changed the way humans influence the inheritance of desired traits in plants and animals through artificial selection by choosing desired parental traits determined by genes, which are then often passed on to offspring. Examples could include gene therapy, genetic modification, and selective breeding of plants and animals.
	b	Students use at least two appropriate and reliable sources of information for investigating each technology.
2	Evaluating information	
	a	Students assess the credibility, accuracy, and possible bias of each publication and method used in the information they gather.
	b	Students use their knowledge of artificial selection and additional sources to describe* how the information they gather is or is not supported by evidence.

	c	Students synthesize the information from multiple sources to provide examples of how technologies have changed the ways that humans are able to influence the inheritance of desired traits in organisms.
	d	Students use the information to identify and describe* how a better understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in how traits occur in organisms has led to advances in technology that provide a higher probability of being able to influence the inheritance of desired traits in organisms.

MS-LS4-6 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

MS-LS4-6. **Use mathematical representations to support explanations of how natural selection may lead to increases and decreases of specific traits in populations over time.** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on using mathematical models, probability statements, and proportional reasoning to support explanations of trends in changes to populations over time.] [*Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include Hardy Weinberg calculations.*]

The performance expectation above was developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking Mathematical and computational thinking in 6–8 builds on K–5 experiences and progresses to identifying patterns in large data sets and using mathematical concepts to support explanations and arguments. • Use mathematical representations to support scientific conclusions and design solutions.	**LS4.C: Adaptation** • Adaptation by natural selection acting over generations is one important process by which species change over time in response to changes in environmental conditions. Traits that support successful survival and reproduction in the new environment become more common; those that do not become less common. Thus, the distribution of traits in a population changes.	**Cause and Effect** • Phenomena may have more than one cause, and some cause and effect relationships in systems can only be described using probability.

Observable features of the student performance by the end of the course:			
1	Representation		
	a	Students identify the explanations for phenomena that they will support, which include:	
		i.	Characteristics of a species change over time (i.e., over generations) through adaptation by natural selection in response to changes in environmental conditions.
		ii.	Traits that better support survival and reproduction in a new environment become more common within a population within that environment.
		iii.	Traits that do not support survival and reproduction as well become less common within a population in that environment.
		iv.	When environmental shifts are too extreme, populations do not have time to adapt and may become extinct.
	b	From given mathematical and/or computational representations of phenomena, students identify the relevant components, including:	
		i.	Population changes (e.g., trends, averages, histograms, graphs, spreadsheets) gathered from historical data or simulations.
		ii.	The distribution of specific traits over time from data and/or simulations.
		iii.	Environmental conditions (e.g., climate, resource availability) over time from data and/or simulations.
2	Mathematical Modeling		
	a	Students use the given mathematical and/or computational representations (e.g., trends, averages, histograms, graphs, spreadsheets) of the phenomenon to identify relationships in the data and/or simulations, including:	
		i.	Changes and trends over time in the distribution of traits within a population.
		ii.	Multiple cause-and-effect relationships between environmental conditions and natural selection in a population.
		iii.	The increases or decreases of some traits within a population can have more than one environmental cause.
3	Analysis		
	a	Students analyze the mathematical and/or computational representations to provide and describe* evidence that distributions of traits in populations change over time in response to changes in	

		environmental conditions. Students synthesize their analysis together with scientific information about natural selection to describe* that species adapt through natural selection. This results in changes in the distribution of traits within a population and in the probability that any given organism will carry a particular trait.
	b	Students use the analysis of the mathematical and/or computational representations (including proportional reasoning) as evidence to support the explanations that:
		i. Through natural selection, traits that better support survival and reproduction are more common in a population than those traits that are less effective.
		ii. Populations are not always able to adapt and survive because adaptation by natural selection occurs over generations.
	c	Based on their analysis, students describe* that because there are multiple cause-and-effect relationships contributing to the phenomenon, for each different cause it is not possible to predict with 100% certainty what will happen.