

Chapter 7

Oak Canyon Nature Center

Introduction

The Oak Canyon Nature Center is a 58-acre natural park located in the Anaheim Hills. It is a fitting place for us to explore three interesting plant communities. Its shady groves of Coast Live Oak trees provide cool shelter from the intense sun. We will be spending most of our time doing mild hiking along the Center's gentle trails. Along the way, there is much to see and smell and hear. The campus tree walk and your visit to the Fullerton Arboretum should have prepared you to more fully experience and enjoy this wonderful place.

The purpose of our visit is to do the following things:

- 1) Acquaint you with the three plant communities that reside here. We will encounter and examine many of the dominant plants in each community. For many of these plants, we will consider their important and interesting adaptations that help them to survive and thrive here.
- 2) Compare and contrast the three plant communities in terms of their spatial relationships and the suite of physical factors associated with each community.

Your assignment and what you will be turning in:

Your job is to attend the field trip and take careful notes that reflect the topics we discuss. You must submit the following items:

- 1) Answers to the questions (provided below).
- 2) A one page essay that describes the general findings of our visit. In your discussion be sure to include the following topics:
 - The physical and biological environmental conditions found in Oak Canyon
 - Examples of special plant and animal adaptations that are consistent with this environment
 - Any evidence that human activity has influenced the canyon and surrounding areas
 - Your personal impressions of the trip in terms of what you learned and how it might influence your life.
- 3) A drawing that shows the community zone profile of a canyon slope
- 4) Data collection sheet that compares the physical and biological characteristics of the three communities



Oak Canyon Nature Center
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The Nature Center is located at 6700 E. Walnut Canyon Road, Just off Nohl Ranch Road, adjacent to the Anaheim Hills Golf Course.

Answer these questions.

We recommend that you use this sheet for notes, then type your answers on another sheet of paper.

1. In what mountain range is Oak Canyon located?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. Name the three plant communities found in this area in the indicator species for each.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. Poison oak is a toxic plant found in shady areas.
 - a. How can you recognize it?
 - b. What effect does it have on humans?

4. Plants in the coastal sage scrub community are adapted to dry conditions. For each of the below plants, list one adaptation that could help it live in sunny, hot and dry conditions.
 - a. Coastal sagebrush
 - b. White sage
 - c. Prickly pear cactus
 - d. Laurel sumac

5. Smell the coastal sagebrush and the white sage by gently squeezing their leaves between your fingers and then smelling your fingers (please do not pick any leaves). How have humans used these plants?

	Riparian	Oak Woodland	Coastal Sage Scrub
General Description			
Elevation and Topography			
Abundance of low, ground-covering plants			
Soil Moisture Content			
Main Source of Soil Moisture			
Dominant Plants			
Observed Animals			
Ground level temperature			