

ASSESSING AIR QUALITY

Some lichens are sensitive to air pollution, and cannot thrive if the air quality is poor. Crusty lichens tend to be less sensitive than leafy and shrubby ones. One way to assess air quality is to look for the presence or absence of certain lichens, and to measure them.

Directions: Conduct a lichen survey to assess the air quality in an area of the forest.

METHOD 1

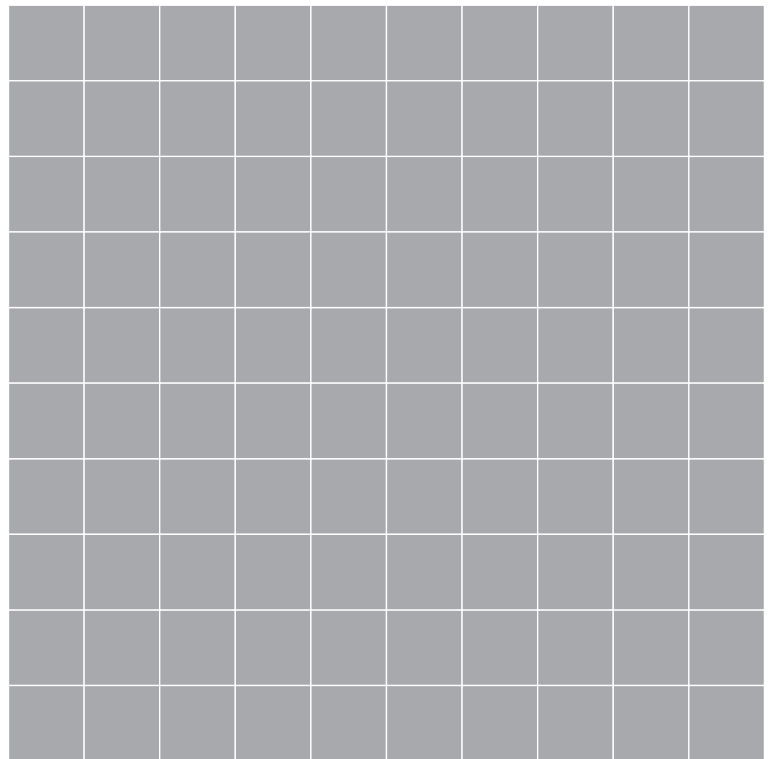
Use data you collected on the “Likin’ Lichens” journal page to estimate air quality. Circle your result below.

Types of Lichens Present	Air Quality
Shrubby, leafy and crusty lichens	Excellent
Leafy and crusty lichens	Good
Crusty lichens	Fair
No lichens present	Poor

METHOD 2

Use lichen size to estimate air quality. Find the five largest lichens in the study area and measure them using the CM Grid. Circle your highest result below.

Lichen Size (in square cm)	Air Quality
>10	Excellent
7-9	Good
4-6	Fair
0-3	Poor



CM Grid: Each square in the grid is one square centimeter.

Questions:

Are the results the same using both methods?

Do you think air quality is affecting the lichens in this area? Why or why not?
