

Biodiversity and conservation · supported focus

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Environmental Systems and Societies · SL

Scope and prerequisites

Supported SL focus. First assessment 2026; current SL/HL brief acquired. Remaining guide, assessment and practical requirements retain their recorded holds.

Prerequisites: read the stated quantities and units, use arithmetic and the model conditions below. Each lesson develops its own method before independent transfer.

These are original or explicitly fictional teaching examples, not actual measurements or completed assessed learner investigations.

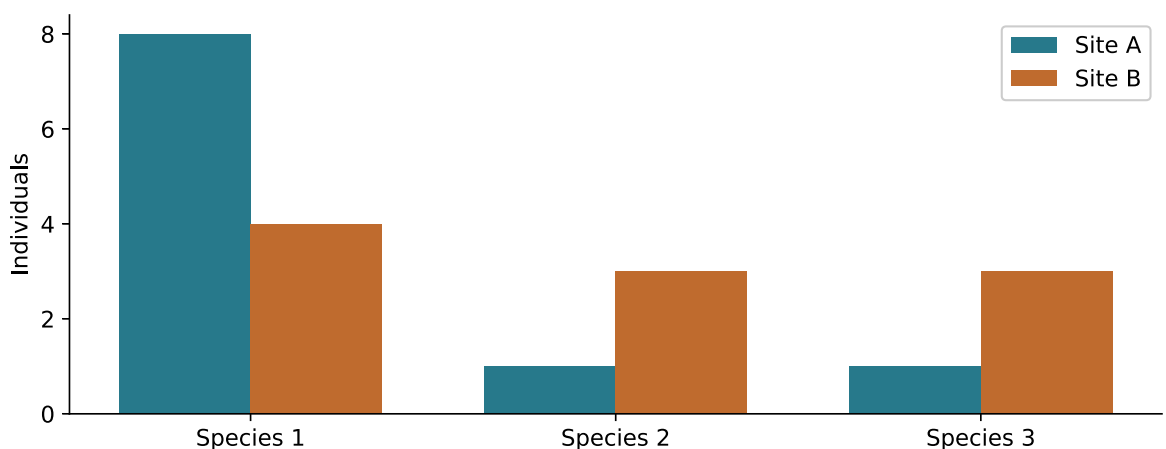
Biodiversity, conservation and sampling evidence

■ What would explain this observation?

- A site with many individuals can still be dominated by one species. Abundance, richness and **evenness** describe different features of biodiversity.
 - Start with a prediction. State the quantities or features you would compare, then decide what evidence could distinguish two explanations.
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■ Build the model

- **Species richness** counts species. Evenness concerns relative abundance. Conservation can protect habitats, populations or genetic diversity; a management judgement must state the conservation goal.
- species richness: The number of species recorded; evenness: How evenly individuals are distributed among species.



■ Choose evidence that can test it

- Compare surveys with similar area, effort, season and identification rules. A diversity index is meaningful only with its formula and conventions specified. Habitat fragmentation can affect movement and gene flow even when total area changes little.
 - Use non-destructive field sampling approved by the school. Identify organisms with a suitable key and record uncertain identifications rather than inventing species. Combine ecological evidence with stakeholder perspectives on land use.
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■ Work from known quantities

- State the known values and their units. Choose the relation because its assumptions fit this case, then rearrange before substitution.
- Known: site A has counts 8, 1 and 1; site B has 4, 3 and 3. Both have richness 3 and total abundance 10. The most abundant species occupies 80% in A and 40% in B. B is more even under these counts.

Example:

A survey records 6, 5, 3 and 2 individuals in four species. Find species richness. Use the same sequence: known quantities → model → relation → substitution → unit and interpretation.

■ Check the conclusion and its limits

- An index cannot by itself explain the cause of a difference. A newly recorded species may reflect improved observation rather than a recent ecological arrival.
- Return to the original observation. Explain what the result supports, which conditions it assumes, and one way to test a competing explanation.

Warn:

A larger total number of individuals always means greater species richness. This claim is false: An index cannot by itself explain the cause of a difference. A newly recorded species may reflect improved observation rather than a recent ecological arrival.

Key:

Biodiversity, conservation and sampling evidence: Compare surveys with similar area, effort, season and identification rules. A diversity index is meaningful only with its formula and conventions specified. Habitat fragmentation can affect movement and gene flow even when total area changes little.