**Identifying Variables**

Variables are any factors that could change in a science investigation. A controlled investigation is designed so that only one factor is changed or manipulated at a time.

Independent Variable- the factor that you wish to test and that you manipulate or change so you identify its effects.

Dependent Variable- the factor that you measure to gather the results.

Controls everything else that must be held constant so you have a reliable test.

**Instructions:** Identify the independent and dependent variable in each investigation.

1. Problem: How does the angle of light affect the temperature of a surface?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Problem: How does an increase in the Pacific sea otter population affect the tuna population off the coast of California?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Problem: How does the amount of smoking affect lung cancer rates?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Problem: How does air pressure affect the boiling point of water?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hypothesis:

5. Problem: How will the length f time it takes for a sponge to dry depend on the humidity of the air?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hypothesis:

6. Problem: How does the rate at which sugar dissolves in water depend on the water’s temperature?

Independent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hypothesis:

**Challenge**: A group of students chose to investigate the relationship between the amount of tree movement and wind strength. They used rulers to measure the distance that tree branches moved, and a wind gauge to measure the wind speed. They concluded that their data supported their hypothesis, which was “If tree branches have more movement, then the wind speed will be higher, because the leaves push more molecules in the air around.”

Independent Variable: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dependent Variable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is wrong with the student’s investigation?