

OUTDOOR LEARNING LESSON PLAN

NATURE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Objective: Observing our natural world is a big part of how we know our climate is changing over time. Observations of nature can be anything from sizes, numbers, types, temperatures outside, sounds, colours. When biologists get out in the field, they take their field journal with them to record what they see and hear.

Curriculum: This exercise can be adapted for grades 3+. See cpawsemb.org/curriculum-connections for Manitoba curriculum connections.

Learning Goals:

- ☐ Students investigate natural elements and living things in a local ecosystem
- ☐ Students record qualitative and quantitative data
- ☐ Students will be able to use scientific vocabulary to describe natural observations

Resources:

- ☐ [Sound Map](#)
- ☐ [Field Guide Template](#)
- ☐ [Example Field Guide](#)
- ☐ [Deepening Students' Connection to Nature](#)

Materials:

- ☐ [Field Guides](#)
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Coloured pencils/markers
- ☐ Blank/scrap papers
- ☐ Timer

Time: 40 minutes+

Activate:

1. Introduce the boreal forest in the context of science and/or social studies curriculum; see cpawsemb.org/outdoor-learning-program/boreal-forest/ for resources
2. Go over the process of making observations in nature, i.e. observing nature and asking questions, taking notes in a field journal, collecting qualitative and quantitative data, exploring and identifying organisms, etc.

Acquire:

3. Take students outside to participate in both of the following activities. Have a timer set so students have time to try each of the activities, rotating after 20 minutes of making visual and auditory observations.

Nature Symphony

- Have students find a comfy place to “tune in” to the environment with their senses. Ensure students are spaced out to claim their own unique “soundscape.”
- Invite students to take in a deep breath and open up to the sounds all around.
- Students will draw a sound map of the ecosystem that surrounds them. Have them make an “X” in the middle of the page to represent where they are sitting.
- Explain that each time a sound is heard, a symbol of that sound should be drawn on the map relative to where the sound occurred and their “X”. For example, if they heard a bird chirp in a tree to their left, they could draw a musical note as close as the chirp felt between their “X” and the left edge of their map. Tell them they can choose any symbols they want to represent sounds: i.e. pictures, shapes, words, squiggly lines, etc.



Photo by CPAWS Southern Alberta

Field Journals

- Have students walk around and observe nature. It could be grass, moss, trees, insects, birds or any other wildlife. It could also be signs of wildlife, scat (poop), foot prints, etc.
- Have participants fill out their [field guide](#) as they make observations. They can also make additional notes and drawings on blank/ scrap paper.

Apply:

4. Gather students together to share each other’s sound maps and field guides. Encourage each student to share something from the two exercises, and encourage discussion from what students observed. This can be a great opportunity to connect to other science and social studies curriculum, based on what students heard and saw. It’s also important to reiterate the importance of spending time in nature, connecting to our environment

through observing it. A lot of scientific discoveries in the modern world came from observing nature.

Conclusion: Evaluate students based on their participation in the activities and group discussion. For extended engagement, you can regularly run these activities to see how observations change throughout the year (different times, seasons, etc.). For extended learning, take observations students made as opportunities to connect to or introduce other curriculum (it can even be a curriculum from other subjects like art, math, language arts, etc!).