



New Jersey School of Conservation

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Nature Art and Poetry

OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide students an opportunity to be in an outdoor setting to acquaint themselves with what they see, feel, smell and hear in the natural environment around them and begin to develop/increase their knowledge, appreciation and respect for the environment.
2. To give students an opportunity to explore the outdoor setting with the guidance of discovery cards.
3. To increase student awareness of the detail in which they can describe a chosen object.
4. To provide students with time to create ephemeral art.
5. To develop with students types of poetry that give voice to nature art.
6. To provide students with an opportunity to create poetry that: expresses the art they created, or expresses the process of creating their art or what it is like to spend time outdoors in their special place.
7. To encourage school staff to photograph student art and poetry as an effort to record their ephemeral art.

ACTIVITY BRIEF FOR INSTRUCTOR:

This class is based on *Voices from the Land*, a program/workshop designed by the Monarch Teacher Network.

The goal is to “help students develop a relationship with and respect for the natural world, as well as for other people and cultures”.

This activity allows students to briefly explore a natural area, settle themselves into a particular spot within that area, reflect on the natural materials and create ephemeral art using materials found there. In addition, create poetry that expresses the “voice” of the art, the experience of creating the art or what it is like to spend time in the natural environment while creating their art.

Recommended time: 1.5-2 hours.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Discovery cards, natural materials arranged into art, white board, samples of ephemeral art, marker, pads of paper, pencils, bag to carry writing supplies outdoors.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

1. Introduction:
Begin the session briefly describing what they will be doing. You could generally say that they will be making observations of the natural environment, creating art and putting a voice to their art.. Explain what ephemeral art is... (a work of art that only occurs once) use some examples of nature art or Andy Goldsworthy's art. Tell them that the natural area you take them to will be their canvas! Their art will remain in that location. *5 minutes*
2. Prepping for the poetry portion of the class:
 - Using an example of ephemeral art displayed on a table (could be a branch with pebbles arranged on/around it), have students describe what they see in a quick observation. Begin a visual list on the white board of their observations in single words, chunks of words, but not full sentences.
 - Then, give students a little more time to silently look more deeply at the art (*maybe 10 seconds*). Again, list their observations.
 - Then, challenge them to look again, what other descriptive things can they say about the art? List them. If their observations were largely visual, ask students what they hear from the art...what they might feel from the art if they could touch it, what if they smelled the art...what scent might the art emit, if any? You could also try to draw out how the art feels. List all observations on the white board. *10 minutes*.
3. Next, tell the class that we will take a look at a few, different and simple styles of poetic writing. Have your sample poems written on a flipchart for visual and auditory support.
4. Samples of different poetic styles:
 - a. The poetic voice of the art could be saying: *I remember....*
 - b. OR a *who, what, when, where, why* voice....
 - c. OR *question poems...*
 - d. See sample poems on the helpful hints page and/or create your own*10 minutes*.
5. Suggest to students that the voice of the art should/could have a strong ending, or a surprise ending as if to make a point....ask how the use of punctuation changes the voice. *5 min*.
6. Then, hand each person a sheet of paper and a pencil. Ask them to build/construct words that share the voice of the art. Tell them they can use words/phrases from the list on the white board or choose their own. Have a couple of volunteers read their poems. *3 minutes*.
7. **Prep class for field experience.** Tell the kids (if you wish) what this experience involves:
 - a. Discovery cards
 - b. Creating the art

- c. Writing the poem
- d. Sharing the poem
- e. Summary

****bring the writing pads and pencils with you. It might be helpful to have the staff carry the pads in a bag.

8. Tell the students you will be taking them on a Discovery Walk and that ideas written on a card will prompt them to discover various things about their surroundings.

- a. Start them off with the card that says: **Without speaking, walk a short distance and listen to the sounds coming from under your feet. Describe those sounds. What made those sounds quiet or noisy?** After you've moved to a location, elicit a few responses.
- b. Continue with the Discovery Cards. You could hand a card to one student and ask them to read it to the group, or have them pick it as if from a deck of cards.
- c. Then allow paired students to move around a bit to observe their surroundings looking for what the card asked them to find. For example: **Find the biggest and the smallest tree. What do they have in common/what is different?**
- d. Complete enough Discovery cards until you feel the group is really beginning to observe the landscape in a deeper way than just casually noticing their surroundings. *10-15 minutes*

8. Settling into a space:

Take them to a location where the art is to be created and provide them with a boundary of the area you want them to stay within. Direct them to walk around a bit in an effort to find a place that speaks to them, to look at the materials available and think about how they might use those materials. Guide them with some thoughts: imagine how the art they are going to create will look on the "canvas". How big/small of a space does your art require? How will your art look from different angles, or in different light, or on the color of the surface the art is made on? What is your art saying to you as you create it? *5 minutes*

9. Materials available for the art

Tell students they may use materials found on the ground, but not to use living things for their art. Exceptions could be if the material is an invasive species, non native or very common. Site check the area ahead of time. *3 minutes*

10. Make the art

Time-wise it will be best if students work as a pair or depending on the size of the group, threesomes. Tell students not to make art that looks like real or man-made objects. So don't make a building, playground, animal, heart or tree, etc. Think about the size of the art, it doesn't have to be huge, it can be small, miniature in size. Keep the kids mindful of safety if breaking fallen sticks, picking up rocks, etc. *10-15 minutes*

11. Craft the Poetry

Remind students how they began the process of writing the poetry by making a list of phrases and words. Finding the right words and organizing them in the right place...much like they did with their art...is key.

- provide them with a clipboard, pad and pencil
- have students make a list of observations about their art
- group the words/phrases into a voice for the art
- ask them to avoid trying to use rhyming patterns
- how they incorporate punctuation, if any
- how will the ending of the poem make the listener feel
- poems can be free flowing and don't have to follow standard forms taught in school

**10-15 minutes* (students may feel this is way too much time OR not enough time)

12. Sharing

Once everyone has completed their poems begin the sharing process by moving to each creation and listening to the voice of the art. Encourage students to remain quiet for 5 seconds after each poem is read. *10-15 minutes*

13. Photographs by staff can be taken for future reference and used back at school.

SUMMARY:

This is an important part of your lesson. Oftentimes, we run short of time to substantially allow time for sharing...but keep in mind that these questions could/should be given to the teachers to use as a follow up in the classroom. The teachers can create a collection of the art/poetry, along with quotes from the students that answer the following questions.

- How has creating art and putting poetry to the art helped you in your knowledge and understanding of the space you were working in?
- How might your experience creating art and poetry help you when you visit other natural environments?
- What art/poem, besides your own, did you enjoy. What made someone's work unique?
- Name two ways you grew in developing art and writing poetry.

10 minutes

Robin Anderson 7/2022



Discovery cards-laminate, cut, hole punch and clip together

<p>Find one kind of food for a bird, a mouse and another animal.</p>	<p>Find two different natural objects that might be recognized by touch. Try them with a partner to see if they can tell what it is.</p>
<p>Find two different kinds of natural objects that hold tight to something else.</p>	<p>Find a tree with “character”. Write a description of the tree so that someone else might recognize it. Be ready to act out that description. <i>What might that tree with good character want to tell the other nearby trees about Carbon emissions and the job they have to do? What might that tree want to tell humans about this same idea?</i></p>
<p>Find something that creeps along the forest floor, or climbs a tree. Describe its motion and be ready to act it out.</p>	<p>Find two different kinds of evidence that insects have been at work. Do any of them appear to be the work of many insects working together?</p>
<p>Pretend you are an insect. Find a place that would serve as a shelter from winter storms and cold. What is it like there?</p>	<p>Walk a short distance and notice what “catches your eye”. What is it that attracted your attention to them?</p>
<p>Find 3 different types of seeds (at least two of which travel by different methods). Is their parent or method of travel nearby?</p>	<p>Find three different kinds of evidence that wind or running water has been at work. Be ready to act out that motion.</p>
<p>Find the biggest and smallest trees. Describe ways they are the same and tell how they are different.</p>	<p>Find two places that would best protect a bird during a winter storm. What is it like there?</p>

<p>Find a boulder or rock with “character”. Describe its character and what it sees. Does anything live on or near it?</p>	<p>Find a tree trunk that is smooth. Close your eyes and slowly run your hands along the trunk. Describe what you feel. Do the same thing for a tree trunk that has rough bark.</p>
<p>Find a tree or plant that has been damaged. Can you tell what caused the damage, or find evidence that the damaged area is used by other living things?</p>	<p>Find evidence of two different kinds of animals in your area. Can you identify the kind of animal from the “sign” it left behind?</p>
<p>Find a rock to observe and record a list of quantitative information (numbers) about it; also record qualitative information (describe it in words).</p>	<p>Visit an area of sun and an area of shade. Place your hand on different surfaces in each area. What do those surfaces feel like?</p>
<p>Walk around a bit to see how many colors of the rainbow you can find. What color was the most prominent? What color was hardest to find?</p>	<p>Scoop up a bit of soil. Look at it closely. What is it made of? How does it feel when you rub a little of it between your fingers. How would you describe the smell of the soil?</p>
<p>If there is a natural water source nearby, sit down for a moment and close your eyes. What do you hear?</p>	<p>Without speaking, walk a short distance and listen to the sounds coming from under your feet. Describe those sounds. What made those sounds quiet or noisy?</p>

Nature Art and Poetry Helpful Teaching Hints

1. Share an example of nature poetry. Ask students to stay silent for 10 seconds afterwards. Don't ask them to analyze it, but perhaps ask them what they liked about the poem.

*The wind lifted me
up into the trees,
where i danced
to the rhythm
of the evergreen
swaying to the tune of the northern breeze,
frozen in timeless melody.*

Christy Ann Martine

2. Create a poem that doesn't rhyme, doesn't count syllables. Provide examples from the support sheet or your own resources.
3. Don't hover over students as they are writing their poems. Wait til students ask for support. You could ask the students questions to help them think about their poems.
Have them read you the list of words/phrases they made. How have they used them to get their poem going?....might their arrangement of words be confusing to the reader?
Could a simple rearrangement help clarify the poem?
If their list needs a little more bulk, you could ask the students questions and use their responses to add to the list of words/phrases.
Have they created their own "poetry forms"? Are they following their rule/form throughout?
4. Challenge the students to build the poem so it has a strong ending or a surprise ending
5. Ask students how punctuation might be part of their poem.
6. Accept and embrace their work. Do not require a lot of changes (can be done back at school). Be excited for their poetic creations!

Examples of Poems (RA)

I Remember When...

*I remember when I was white, icy
Cold when the sun warmed me, and
Pulled by gravity Into the stream.
I remember as I swirled, danced in the current
Around bubbled rocks
Then drifted quietly into an eddy
I remember when I was a snowflake*

Five W and H poem

*Who Aspen leaf
What flat stemmed, twirling and waving
When in the bright summer sun
Where on smooth barked tree
How strongly tethered
Why it's my season to hold tight*

Question poems

*Fox, why do you sit and watch
Me as I watch you
From the stillness of my
Being? Your eyes curious, head tilting, body calm
Breaths in.... out..... watching..... waiting.....
trotting
....and then, the next morning
Joy! you appear, sit...breathe....in....out....watch....wait
Trot away
Why?
Still curious? Or do you just need a rest before you continue your journey?*

NJ Student Learning Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing

- NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Speaking and Listening

- NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- NJSLSA.SL3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge of Ideas

- NJSLSA.SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Language

- NJSLSA.L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- NJSLSA.L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
- NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

LIFE LITERACIES AND KEY SKILLS

- 9.3.12.AG-NR.2 Analyze the interrelationships between natural resources and humans.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

- 1.5.8.Pr5a: Individually or collaboratively prepare and present theme-based artwork for display and formulate exhibition narratives.
- 1.5.8.Pr6a: Analyze how exhibitions in different venues communicate meaning and influence ideas, beliefs and experiences.
- 1.5.8.Cn10a: Generate ideas to make art individually or collaboratively to positively reflect a group's identity.
- 1.5.8.Cn11b: Analyze and contrast how art forms are used to reflect global issues, including climate change.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 2.1.8.PGD.4: Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

All of our field lessons integrate the concepts of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills found in the [New Jersey's Core Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Competencies](#).