

Ready to Report?

Field Trip Lesson Plan



Grade 3-5	Alignment to Utah Core Curriculum	Learning Outcome
Skills You'll Use <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Observation▶ Questioning▶ Recording	Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO's): <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use science process and thinking skills.2. Manifest scientific attitudes and interests.3. Understand science concepts and principles.4. Communicate effectively using science language and reasoning.	<p>There are many ways to report scientific understandings and observations.</p> <p>Activity Length 50-65 minutes</p>

Materials Needed

- ▶ A school playground/outdoor space and/or a selection of objects from the natural world (use items from a teaching toolbox, treasures from nature that the students have brought to school, or items you have collected).
- ▶ A selection of poetry books.
- ▶ Pencil and paper for each student.

Background

Not all students feel comfortable or confident in their abilities to communicate their scientific understandings or observations in ways that may be considered conventional. What's nice is that science and art share the same skills- observation, imagination, wonder, curiosity, experimenting and refining. Therefore, students can share their understandings through art, poetry, theater and movement. This lesson will explore one of these options- poetry.

In an article by Regie Routman, she shares about one such student, a first grader named Kenneth. "For some students who felt constricted by the requirements of school writing (journals, letters, and assignments), poetry writing freed them up. 'With poetry, Kenneth was unleashed, and his talents were all over the page.' Fascinated by the world around him, Kenneth could finally use writing to express himself freely. Poetry writing gave him a creative outlet for his mature understanding of nature in a way that made him feel comfortable, assured, and successful."

Activity

Prepare/Select

Several poems whose topics are nature/science based that illustrate different writing features or styles- find poems with shape, creative spelling, exciting word choices, etc. You may want to look at poems/collections by Douglas Florian, e e cummings, Marilyn Singer, Robert Frost, Joyce Kilmer, Walt Whitman, to name a few.

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To help students feel confident in their own abilities to write poetry, share other children's poems about nature. *A Crow Doesn't Need a Shadow: A Guide to Writing Poetry from Nature* is a wonderful resource full of student written naturalist poetry. You can also find examples on the internet, and in your classroom, or another student at school.

Poetry Sharing (10-15 minutes)

Share

The poems you have selected. Point out things you like about the poem before and after you share it- point out the topic, the title, the shape, inventive spelling, and how it makes you feel.

Act

What the kids liked about the poem. Ask them what they noticed/observed about the poem. Ask what similarities and differences they noticed across the poems.

Explain

Each of the poems was about nature/science. The people who wrote them had learned something interesting while studying nature/science and wanted to share what they learned, but they didn't want to use a chart or a graph or a report, so they chose to use poetry. That's what we're going to do, we are going to observe and study something from nature, and then write a poem about it to teach or excite others.

- ▶ Talk with the students about the features of poetry, how it:
- ▶ has a title
- ▶ expresses important personal feelings and knowledge about a topic
- ▶ can use few words
- ▶ can use inventive spelling
- ▶ may or may not have rhythm or rhyming
- ▶ can have a unique form or shape
- ▶ can be humorous or serious
- ▶ often ends with a punch

Write a Poem Together (10 minutes)

Discuss

How you are going to work together to observe an object from nature, that you want the students to use as many senses as they can to gather information. When they observe it they should think about color, shape, what it reminds them of, and any questions they have. They should write their observations down on their paper.

Share

An object from nature that you personally are excited about. Make sure it has many features that you can observe or wonder about. Share it with the class- walk around, have students observe it, have them use more than just one sense to observe- sight, touch, smell, sound, maybe even taste.

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Record

Student's observations and wonders about the object on the board.

Discuss

What sort of poem you would like to write about the object- is it a list of observations or wonders? does it have a specific shape? are there certain observations you want to include, and if so, are there words that would be more interesting to use? do you want to begin or end with your wonders?

Write

A poem together. When you are finished, make sure you write a title for the poem.

Write a Poem Independently (20-30 minutes)

Explain

- ▶ That the students will now be writing their own poems about nature/science.
- ▶ They will be given the opportunity to observe many things, and they will need to select an object that they are interested in to write about.
- ▶ Before they write their poem, they should spend time observing and recording their observations about the object they have selected.
- ▶ They will need to work quietly, but they can share and discuss objects, and talk to each other if they need help with word choice or other ideas.
- ▶ That there are many poetry books about nature in the classroom for them to look at to get ideas or use as models.
- ▶ If you are taking them outside, make sure you clearly state boundaries and expectations. Also, give them a clipboard or hard writing pad.

Quiet Writing

Allow ample time for students to select and observe objects, as well as write their ideas. Take time to have conversations with students about their observations, word choice, etc. If you have early finishers, have them illustrate their poem, edit their poem for word choice, select a new object to write about, or read poems in books.

Celebrating (10 minutes)

You may choose to follow up by publishing a class naturalist poetry book. Have students edit their poems for word choice, make a final copy (handwritten or using a word processing document) and illustrate them. Bind them in a book and keep it in your classroom library or place it in your school library. You can also take other nature field trips using different senses- touch, sight, smell, etc. to use as inspiration for more poetry.

A Science Packed Day

at the Natural History Museum of Utah

Learning Extensions

You may choose to follow up by publishing a class naturalist poetry book. Have students edit their poems for word choice, make a final copy (handwritten or using a word processing document) and illustrate them. Bind them in a book and keep it in your classroom library or place it in your school library. You can also take other nature field trips using different senses- touch, sight, smell, etc. to use as inspiration for more poetry.

Formative Assessment Strategies

Conference with students about their observations and the words they use to describe them. This will give you insight into their background knowledge about the object as well as about language.

Look to see if students are using poems shared at the beginning of class or poems found in books as models. Using other's writing as a scaffold is great, but it does inform you that they have yet to gain confidence in their personal writing development.



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