

Observation Time Activities

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Goal: I can guide my students with activities which will enrich their observation time.

We are asking our students to make scientific observations. The format of this requires that they include detail in sketches, labels and writing. Also include the date, time, place and weather at each observation time both in the classroom and outdoors.

Guiding questions to ask students.

What am I looking at?

What is it doing?

How does it move, sound, smell, even feel or taste, (if appropriate)?

Why is this (animal, plant or earth formation) here?

What else is living nearby?

How can this live in this place or how did it come to be here?

What can I learn from it?

What more would I like to learn about?

Classroom Activities

1. 4 square observation
 - a. Divide their journal page into 4 areas. You can use more than one page. Each space will have its own focus. It could be a scene in each quarter, a specific thing to sketch, etc.
2. Rotating objects. Select 4-5 objects such as a log, pine cone, shell or a group of small objects. Distribute them so you have 4-5 sketching stations so the groups are small. Students move in groups, choose a spot and sketch without moving the object. Add labels to complete their sketch.
3. Simile and metaphor lesson. Owl Moon by Jane Yolen has many similes.
4. Quick sky looks with some questions.
 - a. What do you see? How many adjectives can you use to describe the color other than blue? Can you predict the weather? Are the clouds low, middle or high in the sky? Can you feel the wind? Where is the sun in the sky?
5. Poetry Lesson Acrostic, Haiku, Shape poems are just a few ideas.
6. Teach up close, middle and far away. Model drawing the driveway to their house (close), the stuff between their driveway and the house (middle) and their house and trees behind it (far way). Then practice around the school.

7. Close drawing. Many science books have close ups with labels as examples. Also index card windows help them focus on a certain part of an object.
8. Model, model, model
9. Helpful things to put in their journals: if available a map of your nature site, animal track, list of descriptive words and phrases.