

Nature Journaling

FIFTH GRADE

The first time students enter the garden is the best time to set expectations and also take some time to explore. Students will be involved in the rule-making process, then find a quiet place in the garden to compose a nature journal entry.

SUBJECT

EXPLORE

TIME

30 - 45 MIN

MATERIALS

A leaf or other easily sourced natural material for each student

Lined paper, 1 sheet per student

Pencils, 1 per student

Clipboards, 1 per student

Access to a whiteboard in the garden, or make a poster with the following phrases:

I notice ...

I wonder ...

It reminds me of ...

DIRECTIONS

- If your school garden does not have an outdoor classroom with a whiteboard, begin the lesson inside the classroom to make the garden rules.
- By fifth grade, many students are already familiar with the school garden and garden rules. Ask students to draw on their past experience to remind everyone of the garden rules and record them on the whiteboard. Basic garden rules may include: be respectful to others and your surroundings, only pick flowers, plants, or vegetables with permission from an adult, handle plants and animals gently, only touch animals when an adult says it's okay (never touch spiders or bees), use tools safely, and walk at all times..
- Head out to the garden and gather in the outdoor classroom. Hand out the leaf (or other object) to each student. Write the following phrases on the whiteboard (or show the poster if you made one): "I notice ...", "I wonder ...", "It reminds me of ...".
- Model the exercise by asking students if anyone can finish the prompt "I notice" while observing their leaf. If no one volunteers, model the exercise yourself. Emphasize that you notice what you see at the time, these are observations and not opinions. Things you might notice about a leaf include the color, that it has veins and a stem, etc. Then allow students to pair up and say everything they notice about their leaf to a partner. After a minute, have a few students share out.
- Repeat the activity for the phrases "I wonder" and "It reminds me of". Stress that all ideas are welcome - students should not feel like there is a "right" answer.
- Distribute the paper, pencils, and clipboards. Have students fold the paper in thirds short-wise (as if folding a letter to fit into an envelope). Have students write the prompt "I notice" at the top of the first third, "I wonder" at the top of the middle third, and "It reminds me of" at the top of the bottom third.
- Ask students to take a walk around the garden and explore for a few minutes. Task them to settle into one area and select one object to write a journal entry about using the prompts. Encourage them to use words and draw pictures.
- Return to the outdoor classroom and have a few students share their journal entries. Ask if they learned or noticed anything new that they hadn't thought about before.

SOURCE

Adapted from:

- John Muir Laws | [I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of](#)

