

Lesson 2

Water Observations

What observations can be made about the stream and its habitat?
What does “reading” the landscape mean?
How is the presence of animals recognized if they are not visually seen?

GOAL To understand that observational skills are important to develop when examining a watershed

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- ✓ observe animal and plant life
- ✓ complete the worksheet
- ✓ draw a sketch of the land
- ✓ write about water; a finite resource

MATERIALS worksheets, pencils, clipboards, paper for writing
optional: magnifying lenses, binoculars, field guides

CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

- Language Arts 2(4)
- Science 5(3), 6(4), 7(5,6), 8(2,3,6)
- Social Studies 10(1-4), 12(5), 13(4)
- Arts 1(2,3)

VOCABULARY observation, reflection, conserve, protect

PROCEDURES

1. Begin by explaining to students that using observational skills is important to studying the river and its watershed.
2. Have students visit a river in their area. If unable to, have students go outside on school grounds to conduct activity.
3. Distribute clipboards, pencils, worksheets, and optional equipment.
4. Have students walk along stream area and complete the student sheet.
5. After sheet is completed, have students “read” the landscape. Have them observe the topography, their surroundings, and the primary use of the land. Have students sketch the site on the opposite side of worksheet.
6. Discuss findings with the rest of the group.
7. To conclude lesson, have students refer to the previous lesson. Have them reflect on what it means to have water as a finite resource. After observing the river or stream (or school grounds), have them write down ideas on how they can help to conserve and to protect water.

EXTENSIONS

1. Have students explore another area such as a forest. Have them participate in a sensory hike. Discuss how using different senses, such as hearing and touching, might change or broaden their exploration experiences.
2. Have students test their observational skills. Have several students place ten misplaced items out in a field, forest, or by a stream in a pre-marked area. Items should be objects that do not belong there such as a marker, pencil, ruler, or other item. The objects can be camouflaged, or be conspicuous, but not be hidden, or be obstructed from view. After the students have set out the objects, have the remainder of students try to find the items. Have them write down the objects they were able to locate. Once completed, have another set of students place the items in different spots in a pre-determined area. Have the remainder of the students search for them. Continue until everyone has had a turn participating in both activities. When exercise is completed, ask students which objects they had more difficulty finding. Ask which ones were easier to locate.

RESOURCES

Journey to the River

GLOSSARY

conserve - to protect from loss or harm; preserve

observation - the act of noting and recording something, such as a phenomenon, with instruments

protect - to keep from being damaged, attacked, stolen, or injured; guard

reflection - a thought or opinion resulted from careful consideration

Life Along the River (or School grounds)

(If the type of animal or habitat is not applicable to school ground, write down examples of animals that could live by or in a stream.)

1. Study the plants and vegetation along the river banks (or school). What types of plants hold in the soil and prevent erosion? Students may describe, identify or draw.
2. Look at land and water dweller (amphibians) – They live in the water when they are young and on land when they are adults.
3. Air dwellers – Look for birds or signs of birds and insects.
4. Look for plants and animals that float on or swim in the water.
5. Look for land dwellers (mammals, reptiles and plants).
6. Look for insects that spend part of lives in the water and part out of the water.