Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation

LESSONS & ACTIVITIES

Observations & Sound Mapping
A Place-Based Activity

Estimated time for activity ~30min

GRADE LEVEL

K-12

CONNECTIONS TO THE BIG IDEAS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Place

Systems

Community

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

SCIENCE: PATTERNS

SOCIAL STUDIES: PEOPLE, PLACES & ENVIRONMENTS

Objective

Students will connect to their place through a sensory exploration of sight and sounds around them. They will discover nature through colors and visualize what they hear and how they are connected.

Essential Questions

- How are colors represented in nature?
- What do sounds of nature inform us about the environment?
- How can we connect to nature through our sense of sight and the sounds around us?

Materials

- Paper or dry erase boards
- Pencils/colored pencils or dry erase markers
- Clipboards if accessible
- Natural place to explore (preferably outside but can be in the classroom or wherever you have space to explore)
- Copies of Student Activity Sheet

Background

Observing nature is a great way to learn and explore the nature world. Our senses guide us to wonder and curiosity. When using our sense of sight we can hone in on colors, textures, structure and the diversity of life around us.

Sound Mapping is creating a picture or "map" of the sounds one hears around them. By honing in on the sense of sound, allows the mind and body to relax and envision the world around through the sense of hearing. Some sounds are obvious and easily detected. Other sounds are harder to hear, or intermittent like a bird chirping or an airplane passing overhead.

Activity

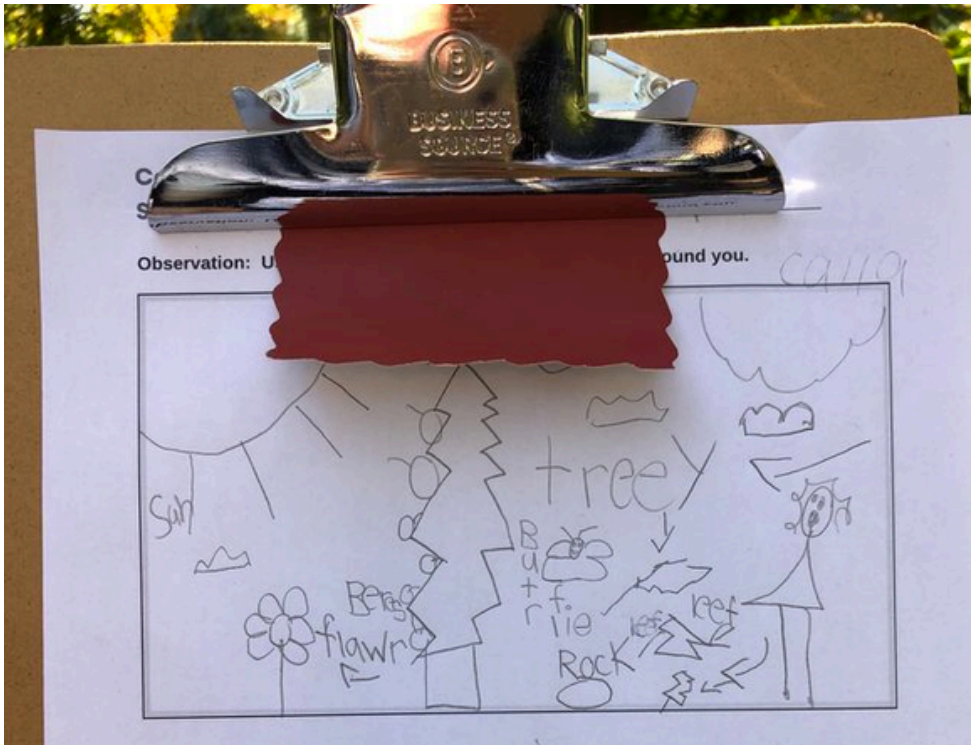
This can be activity can be completed in small groups or independently.

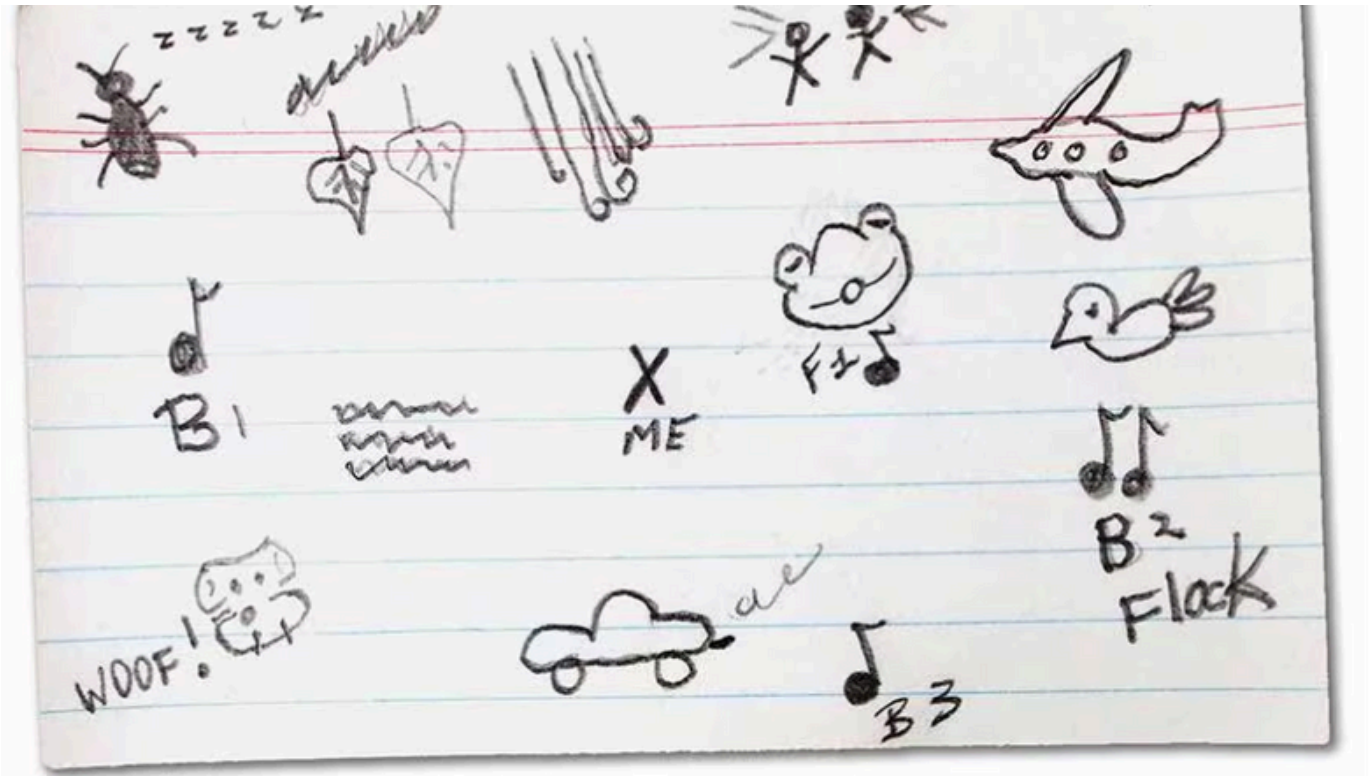
1. Sit in a close line with 2-4 other students. Groups should be at least 5-10 ft away.
2. Place a dry erase board in front of your group. You should all be able to reach the board. Mark an “X” at the center that represents your group.
3. Close your eyes and sit silently for 5 minutes. Focus on the sounds around you and try to visualize what you hear. An instructor will time for you.
4. After 5 minutes, begin to mark down the sounds you hear in relation to where you heard them, “X” being you and your group. For example, if a bird chirps just over your right shoulder, mark it an inch or so to the 4 o-clock of your “X.”
5. Sounds you hear in front of you will be placed in the top quarter of the map; sounds you hear behind you will be placed in the bottom quarter of the map; and so forth for left and right.
6. For distance, sounds far away should be placed far away from the center of the map; sounds close to you should be placed closer to the center.
7. There are no right or wrong sounds. While we often focus on “nature sounds” you can also write in man-made sounds like talking, footsteps, or the honk of a car.

Reflection Questions

1. What sounds were easy to hear? Why?
2. What sounds were hard to hear? Why?
3. What sounds were from living things? Non-living things?
4. What sounds were human-caused?
5. What did you hear that was unexpected or that you might not have heard if you hadn’t stayed very quiet?
6. Compare your map to a peer’s map (someone farther away from you). What is similar? What is different?
7. How might their map connect to yours?

Examples


BUSINESS SOURCE
Observation:
ound you.
Sun
treey
flawr
Rock


B1
X
ME
F#
B2
Flock
WOOF!
B3

Observations & Sound Mapping
Student Activity Sheet

1. Initial observations about your exploration of place. What do you see? What colors do you see?

2. What do you hear? Draw the sounds you hear in relation to the "X" as you hear them around you.

Name _____