

SCHOOLYARD LEARNING

30 cm Safari

GRADES: 1-6 PRIMARY/JUNIOR - SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, ART

LEARNING SKILLS AND WORK HABITS: Observation, Creating Sense of Place, Mapping

MATERIALS: 30 centimetre ruler, objects to act as corners, a clipboard, paper and pencil

ACTIVITY:

1. Collect materials: A ruler for each student and four objects to mark the corners of their squares (or a 2 metre-long piece of string), clipboard and paper.
2. Have students use the ruler to measure out a 30cm square. Use your preferred material (or any natural material) to mark the corners.
3. Have students start by making a list of everything they can see on the surface. Alternatively they can draw everything.
4. After a few minutes ask them to look deeper by picking through the leaf litter, mulch and soil. Ask them to turn over leaves and rocks. Add what they find to their lists or drawings.
5. When finished, have the students carefully replace everything they moved so that the area looks as untouched as possible.

TEACHER PROMPTS: Focusing your attention on a very small area and looking closely can reveal all sorts of interesting surprises. Follow up the activity with questions like: 1) How many different types of plants did you find? 2) What new things did you notice when you looked deeper? 3) Did you find any insects or worms in your square? Where did you find them?

ACTIVITY OPTIONS: Repeat the activity in different habitats in the schoolyard in order to compare and contrast them. Ask the students how their study areas compare, and what might explain any differences they observe.

Consider having the students make a list of what they expect to find before going outside. Compare this list with what they actually find.

Enrich the experience by bringing any of the following: magnifying glasses, trowels or spoons, small containers and identification keys for local wildlife (downloadable on the OEE website), cameras.

Source: https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/Learn_CCSC_Nature-Learning-Downloads_Square-Foot-Safari.pdf

