

SCHOOLYARD LEARNING

Natural Object Inquiry

GRADES: K-6 PRIMARY/JUNIOR/INTERMEDIATE - SCIENCE

LEARNING SKILLS AND WORK HABITS: Inquiry, Creativity

MATERIALS: None

ACTIVITY:

1. Students will be finding natural objects that they can bring back for an inquiry activity. These may be items such as pebbles, leaves, dandelions, small sticks, etc.
2. Take the class on a walk around the school building and through any natural areas in the schoolyard, giving them time to choose an item. Alternately, give students 5 minutes to wander independently within schoolyard boundaries, returning at your signal.
3. Choose a method to form partner groups. Ask students to study their object and create an observational statement beginning with the words “I notice...” Give students time to share with their partners.
4. Ask students to study their object and create an inquiry statement beginning with the words “I wonder...” Give students time to share with their partners.
5. Ask if anyone wants to share their noticings or wonderings with the class.

TEACHER PROMPTS:

Use this activity to introduce nature inquiry to your students. This is especially helpful if your students do not normally spend unstructured time in nature. Explain that ‘noticing’ and ‘wondering’ are the starting points for nature appreciation and for scientific investigation.

ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

- Some teachers may invite students to bring their objects inside to create a drawing, poster, or graphic.
- For Junior or Intermediate students, consider starting a nature journal that can be taken outside during nature inquiry time. Nature journals can include sketches, observations, diagrams and questions. Nature journaling works great through the seasons.

