

# Post-Trip Lesson #1

## **Summary of Activity**

Students review the writing in their journals, share memories with other students and evaluate their experiences.

Time: 30 to 45 minutes Setting: Classroom Materials: Journals and pencils Subjects: Language Arts
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## **Objective**

The students will: 1) review their expectations of, and experiences at Outdoor School, 2) express their feelings about their experiences at Outdoor School, and 3) correspond with people they met at Outdoor School.

## **Background Information**

Give the students some time to share stories and "remember when's" to help bring some sense of closure to their experience. Students also enjoy the opportunity to correspond with their naturalists and people they met during their week at Outdoor School.

## **Preparation and Lead-up**

Get addresses of other schools that participated concurrently with your class. Letters to the Outdoor School staff should be sent to: Walker Creek Ranch, 1700 Marshall/Petaluma Road Petaluma, CA 94952

## **Procedure**

Ask the students to read their journal entries throughout the week at the Outdoor School. Encourage a discussion about their experiences and memories (good and bad). Discuss with the students how their experiences were similar or different from their expectations.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What were your favorite parts of the week at Outdoor School?
2. If you were in charge of the Outdoor School Program, what changes would you make in the program?
3. What were some of the funniest things that happened during the week?
4. What advice do you have for the students who will be going to Walker Creek Ranch next year?
5. What new people did you meet that you want to remember?

## **Evaluation**

Teachers can evaluate students' experiences at Outdoor School by reading journal entries and letters from students.

## **Extension**

Paint pictures or make drawings to illustrate your letters.

## **Home Learning Idea**

Students write letters to naturalists, pen pals or new friends at other schools.

## **Resources**

The Outdoor School can give you the addresses of other schools that were involved in the program the same week as your class.

# Post-Trip Lesson #2

## **Summary of Activity**

Students participate in a scavenger hunt to explore wildlife in their own school yard and apply information learned at Outdoor School.

Time: 30 to 45 minutes  
Setting: Playground, vacant lot or field, near your school.  
Materials: Pencils, clipboards, paper, hand lens (if available).  
Subject: Life Science

## **Objective**

The students will: 1) cooperate to find evidence of wildlife near their school, and 2) find examples of producers, herbivores, carnivores and scavengers.

## **Background Information**

Wildlife is everywhere. Even in a school yard, plants and animals carry out the same functions and processes that they did at Walker Creek Ranch. A line of ants feeding on a discarded peanut butter sandwich or a dandelion pushing its way through a crack in the black top provide valuable learning opportunities. Students can generalize their Outdoor School experience to familiar surroundings.

## **Preparation and Lead-up**

Collect enough materials for each group. Explore the area and determine boundaries before taking the students outside. Look for special features to add to the scavenger hunt list. We suggest the following list but you may want to add more.

- something that seeks the sun
- something that hides from the sun
- an animal's home
- a producer
- a herbivore
- a carnivore
- an omnivore
- a decomposer
- evidence of an animal
- a seed
- something camouflaged
- a brightly colored living thing
- something unexpected
- something living in an unusual place
- the largest wild living thing you can find
- the smallest living thing you can find
- something living underground
- something flying

## **Procedure**

Divide students into groups of three. Give students a copy of the scavenger hunt list. You can make this a memory test by letting the students only see the list for fifteen seconds and then challenge them to write down as many of the items as they remember.

Take them out to the study site and show them the boundaries. Explain that they have fifteen minutes to find and document as many things on their list as possible. Encourage them to record more than one of any item (for instance two producers).

All items on the list must be accurately documented by careful, detailed sketches or written notes. Any items found but not fully documented will not count. Stress to the students that they need to be careful not to harm any plant or animal or its home.

When fifteen minutes are up, gather everyone. Review the items one at a time. Discuss the meanings of the words (such as producer), the details in the students' observations, and the presence of wildlife near the school.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What items were the most difficult to find?
2. What items were the easiest to find?
3. What was the most interesting thing that you found in the study area?
4. What was the most unexpected thing that you found in the study area?
5. How are the plants you found adapted to living in this environment?
6. How are the animals you found adapted to living in this environment?

### **Evaluation**

By looking at the details in students' notes and participation in the closing discussion, teachers can evaluate the students understanding of the vocabulary words and observational skills.

### **Home Learning Idea**

Students conduct a wildlife search in their own home and make a detailed record of the safari.

### **Resources**

A useful field guide is: Natural History of Vacant Lots, by Matthew F. Vessel and Herbert H. Wong, University of California Press, 1987.

## Additional Post-Trip Activities

Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a school assembly to share slides, experiences, and songs from the Outdoor School.</li> <li>• Create a newspaper on your Walker Creek week.</li> <li>• Make a travel brochure on Walker Creek.</li> <li>• Write letters to public and private agencies requesting further information and materials about environmental problems.</li> <li>• Record a news broadcast about your week at Outdoor School.</li> <li>• Present a puppet show for the primary grades about Salmon and their importance to the ecosystem.</li> <li>• Write letters to decision makers expressing students' views on environmental issues.</li> <li>• Write letters to staff members at the Outdoor School (they love this).</li> <li>• Use the vocabulary list for a pre/post test. Put together a class book. Each student does a page.</li> </ul>
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare maps, charts, and graphs to interpret and contrast information collected at Outdoor School.</li> </ul>
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information concerning current, local environmental issues. Debate the issues.</li> </ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study constellations that were in the sky when your students were at Outdoor School. Have each student write a report on one constellation and draw a picture of it.</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the lives of the Coast Miwok Indians. Investigate how they used the natural resources of the area to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a mobile to represent your experience at Outdoor School.</li> <li>• Create mural to illustrate your week at Walker Creek and what you learned.</li> <li>• Prepare a slide show of the class' week at Outdoor School.</li> <li>• Put up a bulletin board on the week at Outdoor School. Include photos, stories, and poems from class members.</li> <li>• Design posters to depict solutions to environmental problems.</li> </ul>