

# SPENDING MORE TIME OUTDOORS

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## Introduction

Kids need to have the chance to connect to an outdoor space. Providing students with the opportunity to learn outside in a natural setting can be a rich learning experience and can help students connect to the world around them.

## Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the importance and usefulness of maintaining a fieldwork journal.
- Students will learn the value of collecting data about the environment via photography and data-collection applications.
- Students will understand that even simple exercises like looking, listening and documenting can be a form of research.

## Grades

K-5 (can be adapted to other grade levels)

## Examples of Links to Canadian Standards for Geography

### Essential Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. Mental maps
2. Spatial graphics

### Essential Element 2: Place and Regions

1. Physical and human characteristics of places and regions within the province and Canada
2. Changes in places and regions over time
3. Perceptions of places and regions

### Essential Element 6: The Uses of Geography

1. Interaction of physical and human systems and influence on current and future conditions

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## Materials

- A nature journal or student workbook for observations
- Handheld device to take photos (this device could also have access to the internet and applications such as iNaturalist and Litterati)

## Activity

Lead outdoor activities with your students that involve the following exercises in observation and inquiry:

- **Sketching:**  
Have students go on a nature walk and select flowers or plants to draw in their workbooks.
- **Create a list:**  
Students can list all of the living things they see (i.e., plants, animals, insects) and later have students try to identify them using the iNaturalist app, species identification books, or the internet.
- **Observing changes over time:**  
Students can do a long-term project that involves recording changes over time and throughout the different seasons. This can lead to discussions about animal migration, plant/tree reproductive cycles, human interactions with the environment, effects of climate change, etc.
- **Looking at what doesn't belong:**  
Students can create an inventory of the garbage/litter they find on their walk, and discuss how those items ended up there and what can be done to keep garbage out of natural spaces (students could also do a clean-up of the area as needed). Ask students to brainstorm simple steps to foster ecological awareness in their local community.
- **Making historical connections:**  
Have students imagine who might have used the land that they are on before them (e.g., Indigenous peoples, European settlers, explorers, traders, scientists, travellers) How has their local community changed over the course of tens, hundreds, or even thousands of years?
- **Making connections to natural cycles:**  
Students should be encouraged to make observations about food webs, predator and prey relationships, weather patterns, changes in the water cycle, erosion, frequency or intensity of natural disasters, etc.
- **Making a map:**  
Students can how to create a map of their area (using either traditional methods or mapping software), while learning the basics of cartography. Younger kids can be given a simple outline map and challenged to make a map legend by choosing appropriate colours/symbols to show what is where.