

Resource Review



TEACHER'S GUIDE: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- These three activities are designed to encourage students to explore the many forms of non-human life they can find in their immediate surroundings. Teachers can use them to invite students to observe in more detail the many plants and animals they are most likely to come across in and around their home and school or the nearest market, field, park, and road.
- We have deliberately kept the design of these activities simple. Often, much of what students learn about the natural world is from textbooks and within a classroom. Our aim is to encourage children to slow down, observe the abundance and diversity of life that surrounds them, and help uncover the sense of discovery and wonder that the natural world offers.

Tips to Teachers:

1. Share the theme of each activity with your students a few days before you do it. Encourage students to record any ideas and questions about the theme. A day before the activity, give students the opportunity to share their ideas and questions. Record these on the board and invite discussion around them.
2. On the day of the activity, share the sheet with them. Go through what they need to do in the activity. Emphasize to your students that observing non-human life forms does not mean that they need to identify or name every animal or plant that they come across. Instead, the purpose of each of these activities is to see how well they can describe in their own way what they observe. Encourage them to describe any animal or plant that catches their interest in as much detail as possible.
3. If possible, start each activity together. Say the first life-form your class and you spot on the wall of your classroom or school is an insect, you can ask questions like: *What does the insect look like? How would you describe it to someone who has not seen it? What does the part of the wall or pavement we can see it on look like? What is the insect doing? Do you remember seeing this insect or another insect like it elsewhere? Can you see the insect interacting with any other form of life? What do you find unique or interesting about this insect? Do you know of a name for it in any language?*
4. Allow each student or group to decide the form in which record their observations. They could, for example, record them as descriptions, poems, sketches, or even collages made of pressed plant parts.
5. Invite students to share and discuss their observations with each other at the end of each activity. Encourage them to also record and share any questions they have about each of their observations.
6. If your students show interest in these activities, you could encourage them to keep a nature journal. They can make a journal for themselves by stapling or stitching together a few sheets of one-sided paper. At the end of the term, students can put together a display of some of their most interesting observations for their classmates. They can also invite students from other grades to this display.

Contributed by:

[Nature Conservation Foundation \(NCF\)](#), which is a non-profit organisation focussing on research and conservation of the natural world. NCF's [Education and Public Engagement Programme](#) runs several projects to engage with children and adults in ecological observation. NCF also develops, displays, and distributes nature education material. This guide was first published in the [June 2016 issue](#) of *i wonder...* The revised version presented in this issue is published with permission from the right owners.

