

Field Journal Activity Suggestions

These activities will help increase students' observational skills.

Community Conifers

1. Take a walk in your local community. Make a tree chart describing all the conifer trees that you see. Name them according to a trait that you notice that makes them different from all the others. (something about the needles, the bark, the size, the color, and so forth)
2. Adopt a tree on your school grounds or nearby. Sketch the tree from a distance and then up close. From a distance focus on the shape. Up close, focus on texture and detail. Does distance affect the way you perceive things?
3. Gather some seeds from a conifer tree. Sketch them at life size.
4. Collect some conifer cones. Try to find at least two different kinds. Make a detailed drawing of each one. Describe any differences that you observe.
5. Go outside on a windy day. Watch things as they move. Draw a wind map.
6. Listen to music of a storm (Debussy/*La Mer*, Vivaldi/*Four Seasons*). Listen to it without drawing. Try to visualize in your mind what you are hearing. Listen to it again, but this time draw to the music.
7. **Leaf differences:** collect several different kinds of leaves. Use your senses to explore them: what do they sound like, what do they smell like, what do they look like. Study them with a hand lens. Make detailed drawings.
8. **Observing tree shapes:** observe and compare tree shapes. How many different shapes can you find on your school yard? In your neighborhood? Try using different kinds of drawing materials to record the shapes in your journal. Use a piece of charcoal (burned wood).
9. **Opposites:** make a list of words that describes a single tree on your school grounds. Now walk around the grounds and try to find objects that are the opposite of the words that you used (tall/short, rough/smooth). You may want to exchange lists with another student to search for the opposites.