



OO, OO, OO NATURE! (PART 3 OF 3) : OBSERVING OTHERS (OUTDOOR BASICS FOR CITY-DWELLING MIDDLE SCHOOLERS)

This lesson plan was created by Leah Guenther as part of the Acadia Teacher Fellows (ATF) program. ATF's created lesson plans are created by educators for educators. Any books or links suggested in this curriculum are not an endorsement by the National Park Service.

Grade Span	Grades 6-8
Time Span	<p>This lesson is part of a series of three lessons on basic outdoor observational skills for middle school students.</p> <p>This third lesson in the series takes approximately 90 minutes, equally divided between preparing for observations, conducting observations, and discussing what was observed.</p>
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. ● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
Focus Question	How could we positively influence how those around us interact with the natural world?
Overview	<p>This lesson is part three (the third set of OOs!) in a three-part framework called “OO, OO, OO, Nature!” that teaches students about three types of outdoor observation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>O</u>bserving <u>O</u>utside: observe the natural elements at their school 2. <u>O</u>bserving <u>O</u>urselves: observe our own behavior outdoors 3. <u>O</u>bserving <u>O</u>thers: observe others’ behavior outdoors <p>The repeating “OO” mnemonic is designed to remind burgeoning nature observers of these three different ways of observing when outdoors.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will learn how to collect basic observational data ● Based on their findings, students will design a product to advise others on ethical outdoor behavior



Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard or chart paper to collect class thoughts during the opening discussion • Worksheet entitled “OO, OO, OO Nature!: Observing Others” (below) for recording observations • Clipboards, pens/pencils • Supplies for pamphlet or poster (computers, copy paper, art supplies)
LESSON	
Vocabulary	<p>Observe: to notice or perceive something and register it as being significant Social Science: the study of human behavior and society Data: facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis</p>
Teacher Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare students for spending roughly 30 minutes outside in an outdoor space where other people can be observed. It could be a small park near the school (where you can observe members of the public) or on school grounds (where you can observe other members of the school community). • Prepare clipboards and worksheet entitled “OO, OO, OO Nature!: Observing Others” (below).
Background	<p>By this third lesson, students should have become sensitized to the natural world through their own observation of it and impact on it. This lesson is designed to build on these former observations by having students watch others’ use of outdoor spaces. After pinpointing an area that could use improvement, students will be able to design a poster or pamphlet to advise others on ethical outdoor behavior.</p>
Procedure	<p>Engage: Before heading outdoors, engage the class in a discussion about how the general public engages with the particular outdoor place, either the public in a public space, or other members of the school on school grounds. Using the board or chart paper, record students’ answer to the opening, general question: what activities do people most often do in this space?</p> <p>Discuss with the class the general idea of social science and the act of observing behavior and collecting data. Instruct students that they will be sitting quietly, on their own, to observe the way that others behave in your chosen outdoor space.</p>



	<p>Lead a discussion and make a list of things that students might observe while outdoors. Get students to think through the Leave No Trace principles from the previous lesson, prompting them to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1. Is there evidence that people planned their time ahead of time? ● 2. Are people staying on durable surfaces? ● 3. Is waste being disposed of properly? ● 4. Are people leaving things the way they were found? ● 5. If applicable, are fires / barbecue grills under control? ● 6. Is wildlife being respected? ● 7. Are other patrons of the outdoor space being respected? <p>Direct students to view public behavior through the lens of these Leave No Trace principles but to be specific about what they are seeing within each category (for example: having a planned picnic shows evidence of preparing; playing loud music goes against respecting other patrons; etc.).</p> <p>Explore: Head outdoors, directing students to take up individual spots where they can observe others' behaviors. They should be able to view people in the outdoor space without interacting with them.</p> <p>Explanation: After an initial round of observations, gather students to discuss what they've seen. Decide on what high-frequency behaviors they want to tally, and distribute the worksheet "OO, OO, OO Nature!: Observing Others" (below) on which they can keep track.</p> <p>Extension: Return to the classroom, and lead a class discussion about what was observed outside. Use the following questions as prompts, and record student responses on the board or on chart paper:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were some of the Leave No Trace Principles that we saw being followed? 2. Which principles were being violated most often? 3. What impact do you think those violations will have on the long-term health of this outdoor space?
<p>Wrap-Up</p>	<p>Evaluate: Lead a discussion about what outdoor behaviors might require an intervention. Students might have noticed an excess of trash which violated the 3rd principle of disposing of waste properly, or they may have noticed that folks were playing loud music, which, according to the 7th principle, was not considerate of others.</p> <p>Have students brainstorm about what might be the best messaging to use to</p>



convince people to change these behaviors. Invite students to determine the best way to reach their audience: a social media post, a poster, a pamphlet, etc.

Have students consider how to convey the following:

- Naming the behavior it would behoove us to try curtailing
- Explaining the consequences in a friendly way
- Giving alternatives to the behavior

Alternative tactics could take a more institutional approach: for example, if there was an excess of trash, could we alert park staff that more trash cans are needed? Could behavior in the space be improved with increased opportunity for activities: for example, are there basketball hoops that need to be repaired?

Once all of these three “OO, OO, OO Nature!” lessons have been delivered, students will have three different ways of interacting with the outdoors, some of which will suit certain students more than others as we get our city-dwelling kids more used to being comfortable and enjoying outdoor spaces.



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Observed Behavior	Numbers	Possible Interventions