

It's for the Birds

BEFORE 3: Eye Focus

Before your visit to develop student observation skills in preparation for field observations at Blandy.

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

VA Standards Addressed

Science (2018): 2.1, 3.1, 4.1

Materials

- Paper
- Clipboard
- pencils

Lesson Preparation

1. The day before this activity, assess the safety and accessibility of the schoolyard for your students. You may choose to designate certain areas for observations.

Instructional Strategy

1. Introduction- Inform students that they will be using observation skills to look for and watch birds on their Blandy field investigation. Ask: What do you think we mean when we use the words “observation skills”? Generate a list of responses to form a classroom definition.
2. Prepare to go outside- Ask students to adjust their brains and senses for observations and collect paper and pencil to make observations in the schoolyard.
3. Outside- Tell students they are to spread out a little bit from one another to begin making observations. Encourage them to use as many senses as they can and record what they observe. Allow five minutes before giving a return signal (Create a unique sound for students to return such as a bird call! For example: You call “CHICK-A” and students call back “DEE-DEE-DEE” which is the call of a common feeder bird, the chickadee.) to bring class together to share.
4. Discuss: what did you focus on? Did you focus on one sense more than another? Did your brain start to wander around all the sights and sounds or did you focus on one thing?
5. Send students back to their observation spots for another five minutes; instructing them to turn over the page to start anew.
6. Bring class back together. Share observations. Ask: how are these observations different than your first set? How are they the same?
7. Conclusion: The observation practice in this activity will help with bird observations at Blandy. Features we will focus on will include bird body shape, beak shape, flight patterns, feather colors and arrangement. If time allows and you have a bird feeder, you could make some bird feeder observations with students to prepare them for the field investigation.

